BR 45 .B74 v.9

British Reformers

Presented to the Theo. Seminary
At Princeton N. J.
By James Lenox Esqr.

KNOX.

W Brit. Reg.

WRITINGS

OF THE REV.

JOHN KNOX,

Minister of God's word in Scotland.

Vol. 9

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

The Religious Tract Society,

AND SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER-ROW;

ALSO BY J. NISBET, 21, BERNERS-STREET;

AND BY OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES,
Stamford Street.

CONTENTS.

	Page
A Godly Letter to the Faithful in London, Newcastle, and Berwick.	1
A Fort for the Afflicted, or an Exposition upon the Sixth Psalm of David	39
A Treatise on Prayer	71
A Confession or Prayer, composed and used by Knox after the death of Edward the Sixth	93
A Faithful Admonition unto the Professors of God's truth in England	95
A Notable Sermon or Confession, wherein is evidently proved that the Mass is, and always has been, abominable before God, and to be Idolatry	153
Of the Lord's Supper	189
A notable and comfortable Exposition upon Matthew IV.	191
A most wholesome Counsel, how to behave ourselves in the midst of this wicked Generation	209
The Exhortation to his beloved Brethren, the Commonalty of Scotland	217
The Martyrdom of the blessed servant of God, Walter Mill	232
The Confession of Faith and Doctrine, professed and believed by the Protestants within the Realm of Scotland	237
An Answer to a letter of a Jesuit, named Tyrie	261
Some Extracts from an Answer to a great number of blasphemous Cavillations, written by an adversary to God's eternal Predestination	305
A Sermon preached at Edinburgh, August 19th, 1565, for the which John Knox was forbidden to preach for a season	351
A Letter to the People of Edinburgh	388
Extracts from the Copy of the Reasoning betwixt the Abbot of Crossraguel and John Knox, concerning the Mass	391
Thanksgiving for Deliverance, with Prayers	411
Extract from the Testament of John Knox	413

CERTAIN EPISTLES AND LETTERS OF THE SERVANT OF GOD, JOHN KNOX.

Page

LETTER I. To his Sister.... 417
II. To Ditto..... 419
III. To ——— 420
IV. To ——— 422
V. The first Letter to his Mother-in-law, Mistress Bowes .. 425
VI. To his Mother 430
VII. To his Mother and to his Spouse 432
VIII. To his Sister 433
IX. To his Mother and his Wife 437
X. To Mrs. Locke and Mrs. Hickman, Merchants' Wives in London 440
XI. A comfortable Epistle, sent to the afflicted Church of Christ 443
XII. To Mrs. Amy Locke, Wife to Mr. Harry Locke, Merchant, nigh to Bow-church, Cheapside, in London.. 451
XIII. To Mr. Locke. 453
XIV. To his loving sisters in Edinburgh, Janet Adamson and Janet Anderson..... 454
XV. Letter to John Fox the Martyrologist 456

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF

JOHN KNOX.

John Knox was born at Haddington, or at Gifford, a neighbouring village, in Scotland, in 1505. His parents were respectable, and gave their son a liberal education. He afterwards studied at the university of St. Andrew's, where he made considerable progress in a short period under the tuition of John Major, an able divine, who had imbibed principles opposed to the lofty pretensions of the papacy. Knox was ordained a priest in the Romish church at an age earlier than usual, and taught philosophy as a lecturer in the university. While thus employed, he read the writings of several of the fathers, particularly Augustine and Jerome; by them he was directed to the study of the scriptures, and by degrees was emancipated from the trammels of scholastic divinity. As he publicly advocated scriptural sentiments, he soon became an object of suspicion to the bigoted Romanists, and having quitted St. Andrew's, sentence was publicly passed against him as a heretic.

Knox was chiefly indebted to Wishart for instruction in the doctrines of truth. At that period the Reformers were openly persecuted, and Knox was soon sought for. He accompanied Wishart for some time, and only left that Reformer the night previous to his apprehension by the Romanists, when Wishart, having a presentiment of his approaching martyrdom, obliged Knox to leave him and return to his pupils, who were the sons of Douglas of Long Niddrie, and Cockburn of Ormiston. Knox was very attentive to the religious instruction of his charge, and contrived that the neighbourhood should benefit thereby. After concealing himself for some time, early in 1547 he took refuge in the castle of St. Andrew's, then held by the protestants, who had lately put to death the Romish cardinal Beaton, by whom Wishart and others had been burned.

Here Knox was earnestly called to exercise the office of the ministry, which he undertook with much reluctance; but when he had entered upon the duties, he discharged them with much energy and faithfulness, in particular controverting the doctrines and principles of popery, denouncing the church of

Rome as antichristian, so that many inhabitants, both of the town and castle, openly professed the protestant faith.

An account of Knox's first sermon, and a disputation with the papists which followed, is given in his history.

On the last day of July, 1547, the castle of St. Andrew's was surrendered to the French forces then in Scotland. The besiegers, however, engaged that the lives of all persons in the castle should be spared; also that they should be carried to France, and afterwards be conveyed to any other country they might prefer.

On their arrival in France, the capitulation was violated. At the instigation of the pope and the Romish clergy of Scotland, they were detained as prisoners. Knox with some others was sent to the gallies, where they were kept in chains, and treated with much severity. They were continually threatened with torture if they would not join in the popish worship, but they steadfastly refused, and a finely painted wooden image of the virgin being one day forced into the hands of a prisoner, (probably Knox himself,) he threw it into the water, saying, "Let our lady now save herself, she is light enough, let her learn to swim!"

The gallies cruised off the coast of Scotland during the summer of 1548, and Knox's health suffered much from severe treatment, but while lying in a fever, he still expressed his confidence that God would deliver them. Mr. Balfour, a fellow-prisoner, one day pointed out the coast between Dundee and St. Andrew's, asking if he knew it. Knox replied, "Yes, I know it well, I see the steeple of that place where God first opened my mouth in public to his glory; and I am fully persuaded, how weak soever I now appear, that I shall not depart this life, till my tongue shall glorify his name in the same place." Such an event then appeared scarcely possible, but some years afterwards it was literally fulfilled. During this confinement, his mind suffered much as well as his body, but he found relief in earnest supplication, and expressed his feelings at that period in his treatise on Prayer. He also found opportunity to write a confession of his faith, and other pieces, which he conveyed to his friends.

In 1549, Knox was liberated, when he immediately went to England. Edward the VIth was then upon the throne, and Cranmer was most anxious to supply the realm with able preachers of the gospel, the want of whom was greatly felt. Knox was soon stationed at Berwick, and his labours were very successful. This gave umbrage to Tonstal, then bishop of Durham; that prelate had renounced the pope's supremacy, and was exceedingly moderate for a Romanist, yet he could not endure the doctrines taught by the Reformer. As Knox was sanctioned by the government, Tonstal could not prohibit him from preaching, but he listened to, and encouraged the enmity

of the Romanists. Knox was in consequence called upon to defend his tenets, which he did publicly, and completely silenced his adversaries. His confession, or sermon, on that occasion is printed in the present work.

In 1551, Knox was removed to Newcastle, where his opportunities for usefulness were extended, and in December that year, he was appointed one of the king's six chaplains in ordinary; two of whom in turn were to be at court, and four absent, preaching in different parts of the kingdom. In this work Knox laboured indefatigably, frequently preaching every day in the week, besides having numerous conversations with the principal inhabitants of the places he visited. Various documents, noticed by Burnet and Strype, show the importance of his services, and the value placed upon them. His enemies, however, circulated many false and calumnious reports which he was obliged to answer before the council, by whom he was honourably acquitted, and he received fresh marks of the king's favour. Preferment was offered to him, but he declined it, and continued his itinerant labours, occasionally preaching at court, where he discharged the duty of his office with the same bold, uncompromising fidelity as Latimer. In these labours Knox was employed when king Edward died. He foresaw the measures which were soon afterwards adopted, and forewarned the citizens of London what they must shortly expect; however, he preached in Buckinghamshire and in Kent till November 1553, when he returned to London.

At this period Knox considered it his duty to form a union with a young lady named Bowes, of a respectable northern family, to whom he had been engaged for a considerable time; and as the protestants were now in much danger, he withdrew to Northumberland, where he continued to preach the gospel even after the day on which the reformed worship was to cease. Three days subsequent to that period, he wrote thus in a letter, "I may not answer your places of scripture, nor yet write the exposition of the sixth psalm, for every day of this week must I preach if this wicked carcass will permit." But his enemies now sought for him; he found himself closely watched, and his friends urging him to withdraw, he embarked for France, and landed safely at Dieppe on January 28, 1554.

He spoke thus of his flight in a letter to his mother-in-law. "Some will ask, Why did I flee? Assuredly I cannot tell. But of one thing I am sure—the fear of death was not the chief cause of my fleeing. I trust that one cause has been to let me see that all had not a true heart to Christ Jesus, who in the day of rest and peace bare a fair face."—"I would not bow my knee before that most abominable idol (the mass) for all the torments that earthly tyrants can devise, God so assisting me, as his Holy Spirit now moves me to write unfeignedly. And albeit I have in the beginning of this battle appeared to play the faint-

hearted and feeble soldier, (the cause for which I remit to God,) yet my prayer is that I may be restored to the battle again."

While at Dieppe, he wrote and sent to England an exposition of the sixth psalm, and a letter addressed to the Faithful in London, Newcastle, and Berwick, among whom he had laboured, admonishing them of the danger of forsaking true religion.

From thence Knox travelled to Switzerland, and after visiting the different congregations in that country, he returned to Dieppe to obtain information respecting the state of England, and hoping to be able to revisit Scotland. Finding this was impracticable, he went back to Switzerland, and settled at Geneva, where he formed an intimate friendship with Calvin. During his banishment, his afflicted brethren were ever present to his mind, and under the feelings their sufferings excited, he wrote his "Admonition to England." Knox's enemies refer to this tract as manifesting undue bitterness of language;—his expressions certainly are strong, but it must not be forgotten that he was speaking of Gardiner, Bonner, and queen Mary, and of their barbarous persecutions.

In November, 1554, he was called to undertake the charge of the congregation of British exiles then at Frankfort. Disputes, however, shortly after arose, relative to the form of worship; those who opposed Knox had recourse to a most unjustifiable measure to procure his removal; they laid before the magistrates some passages in his writings, which reflected upon the emperor and queen Mary, now daughter-in-law to that prince. These were represented as treasonable; the result was, that the magistrates prohibited the Reformer from preaching, and advised him to leave the city. Knox retired to Geneva.

In August, 1555, Knox returned to Scotland, anxious to see his family; he was also induced to revisit his native country, by learning that a renewed disposition for reformation was beginning to appear, which was promoted by some who had fled from England on account of religion. He conversed with his friends and some of the nobility, and urged them to separate from the Romish church. He even preached and administered the sacrament publicly. The papists summoned Knox to appear before a convention of the clergy, hoping to drive him from the country, but finding that he was resolved to attend, they discharged the summons upon some frivolous pretence. Knox, however, came to Edinburgh, and preached publicly both morning and afternoon, for ten days, no one interrupting him. While thus employed, he wrote to his mother-in-law. "May God, for Christ his Son's sake, grant me to be mindful, that the sobs of my heart have not been in vain nor neglected in the presence of his Majesty. Sweet were the death that should follow forty such days in Edinburgh as I have had three." At the desire of some nobles, he addressed a letter to the queen

regent, urging her to countenance the Reformation, but she treated his counsel with contempt.

At this time Knox received an application from the English church at Geneva, requesting him to return and become their pastor. He complied, and proceeded thither in July 1556, accompanied by his wife and mother-in-law. As soon as he had departed, the Romish clergy, who dared not to meet him face to face, condemned him as a heretic; and as his body was out of their reach, they caused his effigy to be burned at the cross of Edinburgh. Upon hearing of this, Knox drew up an Appellation, with a Supplication and Exhortation, addressed to the nobility and commonalty of Scotland, in which he gave a summary of the doctrines he had taught during his late visit.

Knox abode at Geneva for nearly two years. This was the most quiet period of his life. The greatest cordiality existed between himself, his colleague, and the people under his charge. He also enjoyed the friendship of Calvin and the other Genevese ministers. During this time, he assisted several other exiles from England in preparing a translation of the bible more conformable to the originals than those which had previously appeared. This is commonly called the Geneva bible, and thirty editions of it were printed during the ensuing half century. It was at that period more used in private families than any other, and many strong testimonies have been given of its value.

In 1557, Knox received a letter from the earl of Glencairn, and others who desired to promote the Reformation in Scotland. They stated that the professors of the truth continued steadfast, while the papists declined in credit, and invited him to return to Scotland, where he would find many disposed to receive him and support him with their lives and fortunes. Calvin and other friends advised Knox to comply with this call: he accordingly proceeded to Dieppe, where he received letters, stating that some had already repented of having sent the invitation. He wrote a reply, printed in his history, admonishing the leaders of the importance of their enterprise. Knox was thus compelled to delay his journey; he passed some time in France, and then returned to Geneva, having first written some earnest and heart-searching epistles to his countrymen;—indeed the letters of Knox appear to have had a very considerable influence in effecting the Reformation of Scotland. At this time, in consequence of the bigoted proceedings of Mary queen of England, Knox wrote against females being intrusted with the government of nations; but that work, and the controversy which it occasioned, need not be here noticed.

The protestant nobility of Scotland again took courage. In December 1557, they subscribed a bond of mutual assurance, and again invited Knox to return. Their letters did not reach him till November 1558, by which time they had formed congregations in many parts of the kingdom.

The popish clergy now resumed their persecutions, and burned an aged priest of good character, named Walter Mill, which excited universal horror, and stimulated the protestants to avow more openly their resolutions to adhere to their faith. About this time queen Mary of England died, and most of the English exiles prepared to return.

Knox now once more proceeded towards his native country: being refused permission to pass through England, he sailed for Scotland, and landed at Leith, in May, 1559. The Reformer arrived at a critical moment, for the queen regent had summoned all the protestant preachers to appear before her at Stirling, to answer for their conduct. He resolved to join them, and found a large body of the laity assembled to conduct their preachers, but in a peaceable manner. The great body of the Reformers remained at Perth, sending one of their number to court. The queen pretended to be appeased, and authorized their deputy to assure them that she had stopped the trial; but when the day came, the preachers were summoned and outlawed for non-appearance!

The news of this treachery could not but incense the body of protestants,* many of whom had remained at Perth. On the day when the intelligence was received, Knox preached a sermon, in which he exposed the mass and image worship. Scarcely had he concluded, when a priest exhibited a rich altar-piece decked with images, and prepared to say mass. Some idle persons were loitering in the church, one of whom, a boy, expressed his disapprobation aloud. The priest struck him, and the boy threw a stone in return, which broke one of the images. This excited the bystanders, and in a few minutes the altar, images, and all the trumpery were broken and trampled under foot. A mob then assembled, composed of the lower classes, who, in defiance of the magistrates and reformed preachers, hastened to attack the other strong holds of superstition, and soon laid the monasteries in ruins. But so far from encouraging this attack, Knox exerted himself to the utmost to repress the tumult, which in fact promoted the views of the queen regent rather than those of the reformers, as she was thereby enabled to excite many against the Reformation who hitherto had been indifferent upon the subject.

But the nation was now roused, and several of the nobility determined to exert to the utmost the powers they possessed under the feudal system, rather than allow the Reformation to be suppressed, and their country again to be enslaved beneath the yoke of superstition. It is unnecessary to enter minutely into the details of the proceedings which followed, during which Knox preached in the cathedral of St. Andrew's, agreeably to the confident hope he had expressed when a prisoner on board the gallies. The result of his visit to that city was the removal of

* About this time they were first called The Congregation.

images and pictures from the churches, and the demolition of the monasteries ; the example was speedily followed in other parts of the kingdom.*

Many lamentations have been uttered over these proceedings, and it is not Romanists alone who would persuade us that the monastic system was fraught with blessings! Let such persons take up their abode in the countries where popery yet reigns to the exclusion of any other faith, and enjoy the happiness resulting from it! but let them not forget the privileges they enjoy, and insult the religion they profess, by regretting the removal of one of the main supports of antichristian tyranny and bigoted ignorance. It is obvious that where the monastic system prevails, the door is closed against the progress of gospel truth.

While the lords of the congregation, as the protestant leaders were denominated, were able to maintain themselves in opposition to the regent, Knox visited the greater part of Scotland. The attention of the nation was roused ; their eyes were opened to the errors by which they had been deluded ; and they panted for the word of life which they had once tasted. It soon, however, became apparent that foreign aid was necessary ; application being made to England, assistance was given, and in July 1560, a treaty was concluded, by which the French troops were sent home. No settlement of religion being stipulated for by this treaty, the result was, that as soon as the foreign aid had been withdrawn, and the popular feeling in favour of the Reformation was left at liberty, the Romish formularies were every where discontinued.

Knox now resumed his situation as minister of Edinburgh. One of his first labours was to compose a protestant Confession of Faith, which being presented to the parliament, received their sanction, the Romish prelates suffering it to pass without opposition. Knox was also principally concerned in preparing the First book of Discipline, and took an active part in the proceedings of the general assembly of the Scottish reformed church, then first summoned.

In December, 1560, Knox suffered a heavy loss by the death of his first wife, whose affection and piety had been his solace and support in his painful exile ; but public duties called for the Reformer's attention, and prevented him from dwelling upon his domestic sorrows. On the 19th of August, 1561, queen Mary returned to Scotland, and assumed the government. The

* Knox is related to have said, "That the best way to keep the rooks from returning, was to pull down their nests!" Public documents show that the Reformers, both laity and clergy, desired to confine this destruction to "idolatrous houses," and that care was taken to remove the images, &c. from the churches without injury to the fabrics. This is stated in a letter written by Cecil at that time, and it appears that scarcely any churches or places for public worship were then destroyed, though *afterwards* many were suffered to fall into a dilapidated state from the internal troubles and other causes.

reader will recollect that she had been educated in France from the age of six years, and was the widow of Francis II., after whose untimely death her residence in that kingdom was no longer acceptable to those who directed the government, and the state of her paternal inheritance required her presence.

To attempt a particular delineation of the character and conduct of Mary would be quite foreign to the design of these pages, but it is necessary to observe that her residence in France, and her close intimacy with the Guises, who still retained their influence over her, unfitted her for the proper discharge of the important duties she now had to fulfil. She was naturally of a violent temper, and had been too much habituated to flattery, to endure contradiction patiently. The luxury and levities of the French court, in which she delighted, were completely opposed to the habits and manners of Scotland. Arbitrary, and blindly attached to the Romish religion, she could not endure the independence of the nobles, and the general preference for the Reformation evinced by her subjects.* It is not surprising, that as these dispositions became manifest, she lost the affections of the nation at large. Open persecution for conscience sake had been too frequent to render the principles and practice of the Scottish queen, and her bigoted adherence to popery, a matter of indifference. The fires in which the martyrs had been burned, were still fresh in the recollection of the Scottish nation, and the same scenes were still exhibited in other countries. It has been very properly asked, What would have been the treatment a protestant queen would have received in those days, had she succeeded to the throne of a popish nation? Would she have been allowed to reign, even though she had not attempted to interfere with the religion of her subjects?

The prominent station occupied by Knox soon brought him into collision with the queen. Shortly after her arrival she sent for him to the palace, and brought grievous charges against him;—to all these he replied with firmness and courage, and yet with respect; a minute and interesting account of this interview is given by Knox in his history. Being asked what he thought of the queen, he said, "If there be not in her a proud mind, a crafty wit, and a hardened heart against God and his truth, my judgment faileth me; and this I say with a grieved heart, for the good I wish unto her, and by her to the church and state." Of the result of this conference Randolph, the English ambassador, wrote, "He (Knox) concluded so in the end with her, that he hath liberty to speak his conscience; and to give unto her

* In a letter to the pope, dated January 31, 1564, Mary laments "the damnable errors" in which, on her return to Scotland, she found her subjects plunged, and assures the pontiff that from the time she left France, her intention uniformly had been to reestablish the ancient religion. See Robertson's History of Scotland.

such reverence as becometh the ministers of God unto the superior powers." Knox certainly endeavoured to unite both. Of the power with which he declared his mind, the ambassador speaks in the same letter to the English secretary of state. "Your honour exhorts us to stoutness—I assure you the voice of one man is able in an hour to put more life in us than six hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears." Such stoutness was indeed needful in those days. Soon afterwards Knox was called to appear before the queen and her counsellors, to answer for a sermon in which he had noticed, in severe terms, the massacre of Vassy in France.* She reproved him sharply, but he denied the exaggerations which were falsely laid to his charge, and said he was willing to do any thing to content her majesty, which was consistent with his office. As he left the room, he heard some of the attendants say, with apparent surprise, "He is not afraid!" Knox promptly replied, "Why should the pleasing face of a gentlewoman affright me? I have looked in the faces of many angry men, and yet have not been affrighted above measure."

The extent and importance of the labours of Knox at this time can only be appreciated by those who carefully examine the histories of that period. They were in many instances unavoidably mixed with proceedings of a secular nature. The queen had declared, she "hoped before a year was expired, to have the mass and catholic profession restored through the whole kingdom." The Romanists were encouraged to take up arms, and some of the clergy offered to dispute with the protestant ministers. The first who presented himself was Quintin Kennedy, abbot of Crossraguel. A public disputation between this abbot and Knox took place in September, 1562, respecting the sacrifice of the mass. It is unnecessary to say the Reformer had the advantage. An account of the disputation was printed.

In the discharge of his public office, Knox felt it his duty to bear his testimony against the proposed marriage of the queen with Darnley. For this he was again called to answer, when he pleaded respectfully in his own defence, saying, "Out of the pulpit he thought few had occasion to be offended with him; but there he was not master of himself, but bound to obey Him who commanded him to speak plainly, and flatter no flesh on the face of the earth." The details of these and other occasions upon which Knox was brought before the queen and her council will be found in his history. Her tears of disappointed passion, when unable to overawe her counsellors, and induce them to condemn the Reformer, have afforded a copious theme for her advocates, by whom the conduct of Knox has been

* The attendants of the duke of Guise, in March 1562, attacked a protestant congregation while assembled for worship, and killed and wounded nearly three hundred of them, including women and children.

continually misrepresented. The intrigues of the queen's party in the parliament continued to throw many obstacles in the way of the Reformation.

In March, 1564, Knox married the daughter of Lord Ochiltree, an amiable and excellent nobleman. She was an affectionate and attentive wife. In the following year, the earl of Murray and other Scottish nobles resorted to arms against the queen, but Knox took no part in their revolt. It was unsuccessful, and the leaders fled for refuge to England. The Reformer continued to discharge his usual duties, but having preached a sermon on the 19th August, 1565, at which the new king was present, Darnley took umbrage at part of the discourse, although Knox had made no particular application of it to him. The Reformer was taken from his bed the same afternoon, and carried before the privy council, where he defended what he had said, and caused his sermon to be printed. He was, however, forbidden to preach while the king and queen remained at Edinburgh, but as they left before the next sabbath, Knox was allowed to continue his labours without interruption.

Early in 1566, danger to the protestants appeared near at hand; a messenger arrived from the cardinal of Lorraine, with a copy of the league recently formed in France, for the general extirpation of the protestants, to which the queen affixed her signature. She had concerted measures for the restoration of popery, and her preparations for the execution of her project were fully made; but these measures were blasted by Darnley's confederacy with some of the protestant nobles, and the assassination of Rizzio. There are no grounds for supposing that Knox was privy to that deed, although he did not censure it. The anger of the queen being greatly excited, Knox was recommended to withdraw from Edinburgh for a time, and he visited England.

During his absence, the occurrences which excluded Mary from the throne took place. The murder of Darnley, the queen's hasty marriage with Bothwell, and her proceedings against the protestant nobles, excited the Scottish nation so fully against her, that she was speedily obliged to leave her capital—her subsequent surrender and imprisonment are well known, although the circumstances of her conduct which occasioned them are not always remembered.

About this time Knox returned and preached at the coronation of the infant king, James VI., but objected to some of the ceremonies used on that occasion. He urged at this time, that the queen should be judicially proceeded against for the personal crimes of which she was accused. The earl of Murray being settled as regent, the protestant faith became firmly established. The work in which Knox's heart had so long been engaged, and in which he had so ardently laboured, was now

completed, and the Reformer trusted that he should be released from public affairs. He hoped to spend the rest of his life in religious meditation, and in preparation for the event which his infirmities warned him to be at hand. But the partisans of Mary were not subdued—they resolved to murder the regent Murray. He was assassinated by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, who had been spared by the regent when condemned and actually brought out for execution. This dreadful act excited much consternation. Many even of Murray's enemies lamented his loss, while those who had sheltered the murderer, soon became anxious to free themselves from the imputation of having been accessary to a deed, which some modern writers have attempted to justify!

The grief with which Knox was afflicted at this event deeply affected his health and spirits. In October following, he had a stroke of apoplexy, from the effects of which he never fully recovered, although he was able to preach on the Lord's day mornings. Still, however, he manifested his ardent desire for the best interests of his country. Shortly afterwards he was placed in a critical situation, for the partisans of the queen obtained possession of Edinburgh. His life was now threatened, and attempts were made to assassinate him, but they failed. His friends were obliged to watch his house at night, and a number of the inhabitants, with his colleague in the ministry, entreated him to remove to some place where he might be in greater safety. He at length consented, though much against his will, lest blood should be shed upon his account, as the queen's party gave many proofs of enmity towards him, and a musket-ball had been fired into the room where he was sitting, which narrowly missed him. He had removed from the place where he usually sat.

Knox retired to St. Andrew's, where he continued to preach, although unable to walk to the pulpit without help, but when warmed by his subject, his weakness disappeared. The following description of his preaching is given by James Melville who attended his ministry during this period. He says, "I heard him teach the prophecies of Daniel that summer, and the winter following. I had my pen and little book, and took away such things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text, he was moderate for the space of half an hour, but when he entered on application, he made me so to thrill that I could not hold a pen to write. He was very weak, I saw him every day that he taught go slowly and warily, with a furring of martins about his neck, a staff in the one hand, and good godly Richard Ballenden his servant, holding up his other arm-pit, from the abbey to the parish church, and there, by the same Richard and another, lifted up to the pulpit, where he was obliged to lean at his first entrance; but before he had done his sermon he was so active and vigorous, that he was like to ding the

pulpit in blads,* and fly out of it." The same writer also says, "Mr. Knox would some times come in and amuse himself in our college yard, and call us scholars unto him and bless us, and exhort us to know God and his work in our country, and stand by the good cause; to use our time well, and learn the good instructions, and follow the good example of our masters."

Knox felt an ardent desire to be freed from the trials of this life. This he frequently expressed in his letters, and the dedication prefixed to a vindication of the Reformed religion, published by him at this time in answer to a Jesuit named Tyrie, commences thus, "John Knox, the servant of Jesus Christ, now weary of the world, and daily looking for the dissolution of this my earthly tabernacle, to the faithful that God of his mercy shall appoint to fight after me."

He took his leave of the general assembly shortly after, in a letter transmitting certain matters for their consideration. The last public service he performed at their request, was the examination of a sermon preached by a minister named Ferguson. To this he affixed his approval in these striking terms. "John Knox, with my dead hand but glad heart, praising God that of his mercy he leaves such light to his church in this desolation."

A cessation of arms having been agreed upon, the citizens of Edinburgh sent a deputation to St. Andrew's, requesting Knox to return and resume his ministry among them. He complied, and was received with much joy. Knox preached again in his own pulpit the last sabbath in August, 1572, but his voice had become so weak, that scarcely half the congregation could hear him. He therefore requested that a smaller place might be provided for him, accordingly the Tolbooth church was selected for that purpose. He there delivered to the people some homilies upon the sufferings of Christ, often expressing an ardent desire to finish his life preaching that doctrine.

The citizens had requested his advice in the selection of a minister to assist him, and after some consideration, Mr. James Lawson, sub-principal of King's college at Aberdeen, was appointed;—Knox wrote to him the following letter, which describes his feelings at that period.

DEAR BROTHER,

Seeing God of his mercy, far above my expectation, hath called me once again to Edinburgh, and yet I feel nature so decayed, and daily to decay, that I look not for a long continuance of my battle, I would gladly once discharge my conscience unto your bosom, and unto the bosom of others, in whom I think the fear of God remaineth. If I had the ability of

* "Beat the pulpit to pieces." (Melvill's Diary, see M'Crie.) The diary of Richard Bannatyne (here called Ballenden) was published a few years since, and contains much interesting information respecting that period.

body, I should not have put you to the pains to which I require you now, that is, once to visit me, that we may confer together of heavenly things; for in earth there is no stability except the kirk of Jesus Christ, ever fighting under the cross, to whose protection I heartily commit you. From Edinburgh, 7th of September, 1572.

"Haste brother, or you will come too late."

Mr. Lawson came to Edinburgh, September 15th, and preached on the Friday after, to the great satisfaction of the people, and continued preaching till he was admitted to the charge of the ministry at Edinburgh. Knox preached in the Tolbooth as long as he had strength of body; but his health was greatly impaired by the news of the massacre of the protestants at Paris about this time.* It was brought to Edinburgh about the twelfth of September, by Mr. Killigrew, ambassador from queen Elizabeth. Knox mentioned the event in his next sermon, with a denunciation of God's vengeance thereon, which he desired the French ambassador, monsieur La Croc, might be acquainted with. The denunciation was to this purport, "Sentence is pronounced in Scotland against that murderer, the king of France, and God's vengeance shall never depart from him nor his house; but his name shall remain an execration to posterity; and none that shall come of his loins shall enjoy that kingdom in peace and quietness, unless repentance prevent God's judgment." The ambassador being informed of this, applied to the regent and council, and complained that his master was called a traitor and murderer of his subjects, under a promise and trust; and desired that an edict might be published, prohibiting the subjects of Scotland from speaking any thing to the dishonour of his master, especially the ministers in their sermons. This was declined by the council, and the ambassador was told, that they could not hinder the ministers from speaking even against themselves.

On Sunday, November the 9th, in the year 1572, Knox admitted Mr. Lawson as his colleague and successor; but his voice was so weak, that few could hear him. He declared the mutual duty between a minister and his flock; he praised God, who had given them one in his room, who was now unable to teach, and desired that God might augment his graces to him a thousand fold above that which he had, if it were his pleasure;

* The massacre of St. Bartholomew, in which the admiral de Coligni, and several chiefs of the French protestants, who had been inveigled to Paris by the artifices of Charles IX., were murdered. More than thirty thousand persons were cruelly put to death in a few days, and the streets of Paris literally ran with blood. A public thanksgiving was offered up at Rome on hearing of this massacre.

Of this event De Thou, an historian who lived at that time, and who himself was a Romanist, says, "No similar instance of atrocity can be found in the annals of any nation, in all antiquity."

and ended with pronouncing the blessing. He then came down from the pulpit, leaning upon his staff, and was accompanied by almost the whole assembly to his house. As he walked slowly down the street, it was crowded by people who waited till he had passed, as if they were conscious he would not again appear amongst them. The particulars which follow are chiefly from the life of Knox written by Smeton, principal of the university of Glasgow.

From this day Knox hastened to his end. Upon the 11th, he was seized with a violent cough and great pains of the body; breathing with more and more difficulty, till he breathed his last. When his friends advised him to send for some physicians, he smilingly consented; saying, "I would not either despise or neglect ordinary means; but of this I am certain, that God will shortly put an end to my warfare below."

The day after, he ordered his servants to be paid their wages; whom, at the same time, he earnestly exhorted to walk in the fear of the Lord, and to live so, as became christians educated in that family. His disorder growing worse and worse, he was forced to discontinue his ordinary method of reading; which used to be, every day, some chapters of the new testament, and in the old, particularly the Psalms; and some useful portion of ecclesiastical history. In the mean while, he requested his wife, and Richard Ballantyne, his servant, who was always very dear to him for his remarkable piety, that they would take care to read to him every day while he lived, the seventeenth chapter of St. John's gospel, one or other of the chapters of the epistle to the Ephesians, and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: which they punctually and diligently performed.

He was always peculiarly fond of the book of Psalms, God having greatly blessed them to his soul. With some select portions of those admirable compositions he was much comforted in life, and strengthened in death. He also had some of Calvin's French sermons on the Ephesians read to him.

On the 14th, he rose from his bed by seven o'clock; and being asked, Why, when he was so weak and sick, he would not rather choose to rest himself, he answered, thinking it was the sabbath, "I have been this whole night taken up with the meditation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ my Lord; and would with joy get into the pulpit, that I might communicate to others, the comfort I have inwardly enjoyed from reflecting on that blessed subject." So intent was he on the work of the Lord, even to his last breath; and when, for want of strength, he could scarcely be lifted out of bed by the assistance of two servants!

A few days after, on the 17th, he sent for all the ministers of the churches in Edinburgh, to whom, being assembled round his bed, he thus addressed himself: "That day is now at hand,

which I have so often and intensely longed for; in which, having finished my heavy labours, and gone through my various sorrows, I shall be dissolved, and be with Christ. And I appeal to God, whom I have served in spirit in the gospel of his Son, that I have taught nothing but the true and solid doctrines of his word: having been chiefly desirous, through the whole course of my ministry, to instruct the ignorant; to edify and comfort believers; to lift up and confirm, with the promises of grace, those who were weak, fearful, and doubting, through the fear of wrath and a sense of their sins; and to beat down haughty rebellious sinners with the threatenings and terrors of the Lord. And although many have frequently complained of my harshness in preaching, yet, God knows, that I did not thus deal out thunders and severity from hatred to the persons of any: though this I will acknowledge, that the sins in which they indulged themselves were the objects of my keenest hatred and displeasure; still, however, keeping this as the one thing in view, that if it were possible I might gain over their souls to the Lord. My motive for speaking freely and plainly whatever the Lord gave me to say, without respect of persons, was nothing but reverence to that God, who called me by his grace, and made me the dispenser of his divine mysteries; before whose tribunal I knew I must one day stand, to give account for my discharge of that embassy which he had committed unto me, and this had such a powerful effect, as to make me utter so boldly whatever the Lord put into my mouth, without respect of persons. Wherefore I profess, before God and his holy angels, that I have never made gain of his sacred word, never held back any of his counsel from my people; never studied to please men, or gave way to the corrupt affections or worldly interest of myself or others; but have faithfully employed the talents committed to me, for the good of the church over whom I was in the Lord. To the truth of this, my conscience bears testimony; which is a comfort to me, notwithstanding the various slanders which some have cast upon me. And do ye, my dearest brethren in the faith and labour of Jesus, persist in the everlasting truths of his gospel. Look diligently to the flocks, with whose oversight God hath intrusted you; and which he hath redeemed to himself by the blood of his Son. And do you, my brother Lawson, fight the good fight, and finish the work of God, to which you are called, with cheerfulness and confidence. May God shower down his blessing from on high, upon you and your several charges in this city! which, so long as they continue to hold fast those doctrines of truth, which they have heard of me, (God having made me a minister of it,) the gates of hell shall never be able to prevail against. And beware of those, who not only deny the king's authority, but have also forsaken the truth which they once professed. Against whom I denounce, that, unless

they sincerely repent, and return to the good way which they have left, they shall one day miserably perish in soul and body. I would say more ; but cannot, as I am scarcely able to draw my breath." With these words he dismissed them, they rejoicing at his constancy, and earnestly praying for him. He afterwards spoke in private to those who attended him, to admonish one Grange, the governor of the castle for the partisans of queen Mary ; on whom that judgment afterwards fell, which Knox predicted. He was then visited by the chief nobility of the town, among whom was lord Morton, afterwards regent of the kingdom ; as also by some pious ladies of the first quality, and many godly men, none of whom he suffered to depart without a word of comfort or exhortation, as their respective cases required.

A religious lady of his acquaintance desired him to praise God for what good he had done, and was beginning to speak in his commendation, when he interrupted her,—" Tongue, tongue, lady—flesh of itself is overproud, and needs no means to esteem itself." He then exhorted her to humility, and protested, as he had often done before, that he relied wholly on the free mercy of God, manifested to mankind through his dear Son Jesus Christ, whom alone he embraced for wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Perceiving death to approach nearer and nearer, upon Friday the 21st, he gave orders for his coffin to be made. After which, he frequently spoke to this effect: " Come, Lord Jesus, sweetest Saviour, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Look, I beseech thee, with favour, upon this church which thou hast redeemed, and restore peace to this afflicted commonwealth. Raise up pastors after thine own heart, who may take care of thy church ; and grant that we may learn, as well from the blessings as from the chastisements of thy providence, to abhor sin, and love thee with full purpose of heart." Then, turning to those about him, he would say, " O serve the Lord with fear, and death will not be terrible : Yea, blessed and holy shall death be to those who have felt the power of the death of the only begotten Son of God. Being asked by Robert Campbell, whether he felt much pain, he replied, " I cannot look upon that as pain which brings on the end of mortality and trouble, and is the beginning of life."

On the 23d, during the afternoon sermon, after lying quiet a considerable time, he exclaimed, " If any be present, let them come and see the work of God." His servant thinking his death was at hand, sent to the church for some of his friends. When they came to his bedside, he burst out into these rapturous expressions, " These two last nights I have been in meditation on the troubled state of the church of God, the spouse of Jesus Christ, despised of the world, but precious in the sight of God. I have called to God for her, and have committed her to her

Head, Jesus Christ. I have fought against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things, and have prevailed. I have been in heaven, and have possession. I have tasted of the heavenly joys where at present I am." He repeated the Lord's prayer and the apostles' creed; enlarging, as he went on, most sweetly and spiritually, upon each of the separate petitions and articles, to the great comfort and edification of them that were by. Afterwards, lifting up his hands towards heaven, he cried out, "To thee, Lord, do I commit myself. Thou knowest how intense my pains are; but I do not complain. Yea, Lord, if such be thy will concerning me, I could be content to bear these pains for many years together, which in thy just judgment thou hast laid upon me. Only do thou continue to enlighten my mind through Christ Jesus." He passed that night in suffering, being somewhat worse than usual. The next day it was evident that his end drew near. The fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians being repeatedly read to him, at his own desire, he exclaimed, "Oh what sweet and heavenly consolation my Lord affords me, from this blessed chapter!" adding, "Now for the last time I commend my soul, spirit, and body (touching three of his fingers as he spoke) into thy hand O Lord." But, when one of his eyes became blind, and his speech began to fail, he cried faintly, "Turn to the seventeenth of St. John, and read it carefully; for there I cast my first anchor." When that was read, he rested a little; but soon began to utter very heavy groans and deep sighs; so that the by-standers plainly perceived he was grappling with some very great temptation. There were, at this time, present in the room, one John Johnson, a holy man, and Robert Campbell, a great friend to the gospel, Mrs. Knox, and others; who, observing his agonies, thought him to be in the pains of death. At length, however, contrary to their expectation, he recovered, like one awaked from sleep; and, being asked how he did, he answered, "Many have been my conflicts with satan, in the course of my frail life, and many the assaults which I have sustained; but that roaring lion never beset me so furiously and forcibly as now. Often has he set my sins in array before me; often has he tempted me to despair; and often strove to ensnare me with the enticements of the world: but, I being enabled to hew his snares in pieces with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, he was not able to prevail against me. But now he has found out a new way. That crafty serpent has endeavoured to persuade me, that, because I have faithfully and successfully discharged my ministerial office, I am on that account deserving of eternal life and a happy immortality. But God was pleased to make me triumphant over this temptation also, by powerfully suggesting to my memory those texts, What hast thou that thou didst not receive? and, By the grace of God, I am what I am: and, Not I, but the grace of God in me:—being thus vanquished, he left me. I thank my God, therefore, through

Christ, who has vouchsafed me the victory; and I am persuaded, that satan will not be permitted to return, or molest me any more, in my passage to glory: but that I shall, without any pain of body, or agony of soul, sweetly and peacefully exchange this wretched life for that blessed and immortal one, which is through Christ Jesus." He lay quiet for some hours till evening prayers were said; and being asked, whether he could hear them distinctly, he answered, "Would to God you all heard them with such ears, and perceived with the same mind, as I am enabled to do! Lord Jesus receive my spirit." About eleven o'clock he gave a deep sigh, and said, "Now it is come." Bannatyne then drew near the bed, and desired him to think upon the comfortable promises of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which he had so often declared to others; and perceiving he was speechless, requested him to give some sign, whereby they might know that he died in the steadfast belief and enjoyment of those gospel truths; and, likewise, of his comfortable assurance of a blissful immortality through Christ. On which, as if he had received fresh strength, he triumphantly lifted his hand toward heaven, and then quietly departed to the rest which remaineth for the people of God, on November 24, 1572, about eleven o'clock at night, without any convulsion or apparent suffering, but worn out with his extraordinary labours of body and mind.

He was interred on the twenty-sixth, in the church-yard of St. Giles's, the corpse being attended by several lords who were then at Edinburgh. The earl of Morton, that day chosen regent, when Knox was laid in the grave, said, "There lies a man, who in his life never feared the face of a man, who hath been often threatened with dag and dagger, but yet hath ended his days in peace and honour. For God's providence watched over him in a special manner, when his very life was sought."

The reader is now in possession of the principal circumstances in the life and character of the great Scottish Reformer, and he may judge how far the delineation which is given by historians in general is correct. The world cannot love the devoted active followers of Christ, and that Knox was one of them cannot be denied. It is not intended to represent him as a faultless character, but those parts of his conduct which have been most frequently enlarged upon by his enemies, are mainly to be ascribed to the times in which he lived, and the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. With respect to his temper and language, we may apply to Knox what Seckendorf has said of Luther: "The assertions frequently made respecting him, show that the authors do not write a history, but a satire; and, according to the usual manner of sophists, would deduce most dreadful accusations from trifling and venial circumstances. But enough has been said respecting such charges, the grounds for which these censors think they have discovered in some free expressions;—but neither the

whole nor the greater part of the writings of the Reformer, justify the imputation of excessive bitterness or freedom. Many words and much phraseology, which at this day would be accounted contumelious or objectionable, at that time were in common use, and could be uttered without impropriety, nor were the lighter expressions accounted incorrect." (Seck. iii. p. 643.)

The public conduct of Knox cannot be fairly judged without full consideration of the characters amongst whom his lot was cast. It has been well inquired, what would the individuals who have been most admired in the present day have been able to effect in those times? Would they have done more than Erasmus performed in the days of Luther? And what would have been the state of religion now—as far as human judgment can see—if individuals of a less decided temperament had undertaken the work?

To these observations, some of which have been suggested by Dr. M'Crie, we may add the following extract from his able and interesting life of Knox. "He thought only of advancing the glory of God, and promoting the welfare of his country. Intrepidity, a mind elevated above sordid views, indefatigable activity, and constancy which no disappointments could shake, eminently qualified him for the hazardous and difficult post which he occupied. His integrity was above the suspicion of corruption; his firmness equally proof against the solicitations of friends, and the threats of enemies. The opinion which his countrymen entertained of his sagacity, as well as his honesty, is evident from the confidence which they reposed in him. The measures taken for advancing the Reformation were either adopted at his suggestion, or submitted to his advice, and we must pronounce them to have been as wisely planned as they were boldly executed.

"His ministerial functions were discharged with the greatest assiduity, fidelity, and fervour. No avocation or infirmity prevented him from appearing in the pulpit. Preaching was an employment in which he delighted, and for which he was qualified by an extensive acquaintance with the scriptures, and the happy art of applying them in the most striking manner to the existing circumstances of the church, and of his hearers. His powers of alarming the conscience, and arousing the passions, have been frequently mentioned; but he excelled also in offering up the consolations of the gospel, and calming the breasts of those who were agitated with a sense of their sins. When he discoursed of the griefs and joys, the conflicts and triumphs, of genuine christians, he declared what he himself had known and felt. The letters which he wrote to his familiar acquaintances breathe the most ardent piety. The religious meditations in which he spent his last sickness were not confined to that period of his life; they had been his habitual employment

from the time that he was brought to the knowledge of the truth, and his solace amidst all the hardships and perils through which he passed."

The writings of Knox may be divided into four classes, 1. Historical. This comprises his history of the Reformation in Scotland, which is a very valuable work, being written by one who lived amidst the scenes he describes, and who would not intentionally misrepresent, although, like every other man, he may sometimes have been mistaken.

2. Admonitory. From the peculiar circumstances of the times in which Knox lived, these pieces contain much that has lost its interest at the present day. Only a part of them are included in the present collection. Those which are omitted, have however been frequently reprinted.*

3. Devotional. These are not numerous, but the reader will regret they are not more so. They are among the most valuable productions of the British Reformers ; and having been written under severe trials, both mental and bodily, they come from the heart, and powerfully appeal to it. They are now for the first time republished, the former collections of his writings having only contained those which more immediately related to his public life, so that the piety and christian feeling of Knox have been comparatively little known.

4. Letters. Several which are included in the present volume are now printed for the *first* time. For them the reader is indebted to Dr. M'Crie, who kindly furnished copies from the manuscript volume of the Reformer's writings in his possession, which supplied such important materials for his life of Knox.† He also supplied from the same source, transcripts of several tracts now republished, by which many errors which had appeared in the hastily printed editions have been removed. In these letters of Knox, the reader will trace the same mind which actuated Bradford and his other brethren among the English Reformers, and there are few persons, who, after perusing the following pages, will not highly estimate the talents, piety, and christian zeal of this holy Reformer.

* The writings of Knox not included, either wholly or in part, in this collection, are, Copy of a letter to the queen regent in 1556.—The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment (government) of women.—Appellation of John Knox, with his supplication to the nobility, &c.—Exhortation to England.—To the preceding, which are printed with the editions of Knox's History, may be added, the Form of Excommunication, and the Treatise of Fasting, other pieces written for the general Assembly ; also his History of the Reformation of Religion within the realm of Scotland. Many letters written by Knox not included here, have been printed, but they chiefly relate to historical subjects.

† That valuable work has supplied many particulars adverted to in this biographical sketch, but Dr. M'Crie's Life of John Knox is too well known, and too highly valued, to require any detailed notice in this place.

A

GODLY LETTER

SENT UNTO THE FAITHFUL

IN

LONDON, NEWCASTLE, AND BERWICK,

AND TO ALL OTHERS WITHIN THE REALM OF ENGLAND THAT LOVE THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

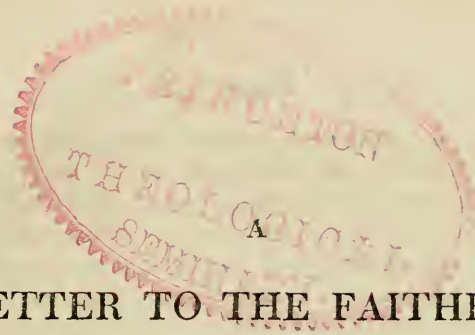
BY

JOHN KNOX.

He that continueth unto the end shall be saved.—MATT. x.

Written in 1554.

One of the first cares of Knox on arriving at Dieppe, after his departure from England in January 1554, was to employ his pen in writing suitable advices to those whom he could no longer instruct by his sermons and conversations. With this view he transmitted to England two short treatises.—One was a letter, addressed to those in London and other parts of England among whom he had been employed as a preacher. The purport of it was to warn them against defection from the religion which they had professed, or giving countenance to the idolatrous worship erected among them. The conclusion is a most impressive and eloquent exhortation, in which he addresses their consciences, their hopes, their fears, their feelings; and adjures them by all that is sacred, and all that is dear to them, as men, as parents, and as christians, not to start back from their good profession, and plunge themselves and their posterity into the gulf of ignorance and idolatry. The reader of this letter cannot fail to be struck with its animated strain, when he reflects that it proceeded from a forlorn exile, in a strange country, without a single acquaintance, and ignorant where he could find a place of abode or the means of subsistence.—*M'Crie's Life of Knox.*



A

LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL

IN

LONDON, NEWCASTLE, AND BERWICK,

BY JOHN KNOX.

A. D. 1554.

John Knox, to the faithful in London, Newcastle, and Berwick, and to all others within the realm of England, that desire the coming of our Lord Jesus, wisheth continuance in godliness to the end.

WHEN I remember the fearful threatenings of God, pronounced against realms and nations, to whom the light of God's word hath been offered, and contemptuously by them refused; as my heart unfeignedly mourns for your present state, dearly beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ, so do the whole powers of body and soul tremble and shake for the plagues that are to come. But that God's true word has been offered to the realm of England none can deny, except such as are holden in bondage by the devil, God justly so punishing their proud disobedience, and have neither eyes to see, nor understanding to discern good from bad, nor darkness from light. Against whom, at this present, no otherwise will I contend, than did the prophet Jeremiah against the stiff-necked and stubborn people of Judea, saying, "The wrath of the Lord shall not be turned away, till he have fulfilled the thoughts of his heart." Thus leave I them, as of whose repentance there is small hope, to the hands of Him who shall not forget their horrible blasphemies spoken in despite of Christ's truth, and of his true messengers. And with you that unfeignedly mourn for the great shipwreck of God's

true religion, I purpose to communicate such counsel and admonition, now by my rude pen, as formerly it pleased God I should proclaim in your ears. The end of which my admonition is, that even as ye purpose and intend to avoid God's vengeance, both in this life and in the life to come; that so ye avoid and fly, as well in body as in spirit, all fellowship and society with idolaters in their idolatry.

You shrink, I know, even at the first, but if an orator had the matter in handling, he would prove it honest, profitable, easy, and necessary to be done, and in every one point were many incitements for a long orison.* But as I never laboured to persuade any man in matters of religion, I take God to record in my conscience, except by the true simplicity of God's word, no more I intend to do in this behalf. But this I affirm, that to fly from idolatry is so profitable, and so necessary for a christian, that unless he so do, all worldly profit turns to his disprofit and perpetual condemnation. Profit either pertains to the bodies or to the souls of ourselves or of our posterity. Corporeal commodities consist in such things as man chiefly covets for the body; as riches, estimation, long life, health, and quietness in the earth. The only comfort and joy of the soul, is God by his word expelling ignorance, sin, and death, and in the place of those planting true knowledge of himself, and with the same, justice† and life by Christ Jesus his Son. If either profit of body or of soul move us, then it is necessary that we avoid idolatry; for it is plain that the soul has neither life nor comfort, but by God alone, with whom idolaters have no other fellowship nor participation than the devils have. And although idolatry triumph for a moment, yet the hour approaches when God's vengeance shall strike; not only their souls, but even their vile carcasses shall be plagued, as he has threatened before. Their cities shall be burned, their land shall be laid waste, their enemies shall dwell in their strong holds, their wives and their daughters shall be defiled, their children shall fall by the edge of the sword; no mercy shall they find, because they have refused the God of all mercy, when lovingly and long he called upon them. Ye would know the time, and what certainty I have thereof. To God will I appoint no time, but this and more plagues shall fall upon the realm of England,

* Supplication. † Righteousness.

and that ere it be long, except repentance prevent, I am as sure as I am that my God liveth.

This, my affirmation, shall displease many, and shall content few. God, who knoweth the secrets of all hearts, knoweth that it also displeases me, and yet, like as formerly, I have been compelled to speak in your audience, and in the audience of others, such things as were not plausible to the ears of men, whereof, alas, one great part is this day come to pass; so I am compelled to write, with the tears in my eyes, I know to your displeasure. But, dear brethren, be subject unto God, and give place to his wrath, that ye may escape his everlasting vengeance. My pen, I trust, shall now be no more vehement, than my tongue has been oftener than once, not only before you, but also before the chief of the realm. What was said in Newcastle and Berwick before the sweating sickness, I trust, some in those parts yet bear in mind. And upon the day of All Saints (as they call it) in the year that the duke of Somerset was last apprehended, let Newcastle witness. What before him that was then duke of Northumberland in more places than one. What before the king's majesty whom God hath called from worldly misery for our offences: at Windsor, Hampton-court, and Westminster:* and, finally, what was spoken in London in more places than one, when fires of joy and riotous banqueting were at the proclamation of Mary, your queen. If men will not speak, yet shall the stones and timbers of those places cry in fire, and shall bear record that the truth was spoken; and shall absolve me in that behalf in the day of the Lord. Suspect not, brethren, that I delight in your calamities, or in the plagues that shall fall upon the unthankful nation. No, I take God to record, that my heart mourneth within me, and that I am cruciate† with remembrance of your troubles: but if I should cease, then should I do against my conscience, as also against my knowledge, and so should I be guilty of the blood of them that perish for lack of admonition, and the plague not be delayed a moment. For the Lord has appointed the day of his vengeance, before which he sends his trumpets and messengers, that his elect, watching, and praying, with all sobriety, may, by his mercy, escape the vengeance that shall come.

But ye would know the grounds of my certitude; God

* Knox was one of the preachers to Edward VI.

† Suffering excruciating sorrow.

grant that hearing them ye may understand and steadfastly believe the same. My assurances are not the marvels of Merlin,* nor yet the dark sentences of profane prophecies, but the plain truth of God's word. The invincible justice of the everlasting God, and the ordinary course of his punishments and plagues from the beginning, are my assurance and grounds. God's word threatens destruction to all the disobedient; his immutable justice must require the same. The ordinary punishments and plagues show examples. What man, then, can cease to prophesy? The word of God plainly speaks that if a man shall hear the curses of God's law, and yet, in his heart, shall promise to himself felicity and good luck, thinking that he shall have peace, although he walk after the imaginations of his own heart; to such a man the Lord will not be merciful, but his wrath shall be kindled against him, and he shall destroy his name from under heaven. How the Lord threatens plague after plague, and even the last to be sorest, while, finally, he will consume realms and nations if they repent not, read the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, which chapter oft have I willed you to mark, and I still do unfeignedly. And think not that it appertains to the Jews only; no, brethren, the prophets are the interpreters of the law, and they make the plagues of God common to all offenders. The punishment ever begins at the household of God. And here must I touch a point of the devilish confession made of late by the miserable man, whose name, for sorrow, I cannot recite.† This argument he used to prove the doctrine of late years preached in the realm of England to be wicked. "Troubles and plagues," said he, "have followed the same not only here in England, but also in Germany," as he willed you to mark. This fragile and vain argument at this time no otherwise will I labour to confute, than by plain and evident scriptures, declaring that the vengeance and plagues of God do appertain to all the disobedient. Howbeit he begins to punish where his grace has been offered and obstinately refused; and that is the cause why Germany and England have been plagued these years past; which may be an answer to the blind rage of ignorant men who never will know the true cause of God's plagues.

* Merlin was a British writer of the fifth century. Extravagant prophecies, and other ridiculous works, are ascribed to him.

† The duke of Northumberland, deceived by hopes of pardon, professed to be a papist at his death.

The scriptures declaring God to punish all nations, after he has corrected his own people, are written by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, as also by others, who proclaimed and denounced plagues to fall upon the people of Israel, and upon the house of Judah, for the contempt of God and of his law. Prophecies also against certain nations and cities, not only adjacent to Jerusalem, but also against such as were far distant; as against Moab, Ammon, Egypt, Palestine, Tyre, Damascus, and against Babylon. And, in conclusion, general prophecies against all the disobedient, as in the twenty-fourth chapter of Isaiah plainly appears. As also the Lord commands Jeremiah to give the cup of his wrath to all nations round about, who should drink the same although they refused it of his hand; that is, although they would not believe the threatenings and voices of the prophet, yet should they not escape the plagues that he spake; For every nation like unto this will I punish, saith the Lord of hosts. As also Amos agrees with him, saying, "The eyes of the Lord are upon every sinful nation, to root it out of the earth."

These and many more places evidently prove that the plagues spoken in the law of God do appertain to every rebellious people, be they Jew or be they Gentile; Christians in title or Turks in profession. And the grounds and assurance of the prophets were the same, which before I have rehearsed to be my assurance, that England shall be plagued; that is, God's immutable and inviolable justice, which cannot spare in one realm or nation the offences which he most severely punishes in another; for so were he unequal, and making a difference as touching execution of his just judgments betwixt realm and realm, and betwixt person and person, which is most contrary to the integrity of his justice: for as the righteous Judge of the whole earth cannot destroy the just with the wicked, so can he not spare one sort of obstinate malefactors and punish another; as himself witnesses by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "I have begun to punish in the house where my name is called, and shall I spare the rest?" (Jer. xxv. xliv.) As though the Lord God would say, How can my justice suffer and permit their crimes and offences to go unpunished in proud contemners, who neither regard me nor my own people and children, who externally bear some reverence to my name?

That God hath punished other nations and realms needs no probation, for experience teaches it; but whether the like crimes have been committed and yet are committed within the realm of England, as were committed in those nations before their last destruction, that is to be inquired. In this case nothing can better instruct us than God's plain word rebuking the vices that reigned in those days. And omitting to recite all, it shall suffice to rehearse for this present some places of the prophet Jeremiah, the time of whose prophecy, well considered, shall make the matter more sensible and better to be understood. He begins his prophecy in the thirteenth year of king Josiah's reign, and continued till after the destruction of Jerusalem, which came in the eleventh year of the reign of king Zedekiah; so that the whole time of his preaching before the plagues came was thirty-six years and six months.* So long preached and prophesied that godly man among that stubborn nation. How much mocking and trouble were sustained evidently, appears by his complaints; for thus he introduces God speaking, "My people have committed double iniquity, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged unto themselves cisterns that can contain no water. Why wilt thou justify thy own way, saith the Lord? under thy wings are found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents, whom thou foundest not in corners, and yet thou sayest, I am innocent: thou hast gotten a harlot's forehead: thou canst not think shame: my people is foolish, they know not me; they are foolish children, and have no wisdom; wise they are to commit mischief, but to do good they are altogether ignorant. Every man may beware of his neighbour, and no man assuredly may trust in his brother, for every man is become deceitful; they have practised their tongues to lies and guile. They have left my law, saith the Lord, and have followed the wicked imaginations of their own hearts; they have followed Baalim, whom their fathers taught them."

Of this and of many like places, the general offences of that people appear to have been, defection from God, embracing of false religion, shedding of innocent blood, justification of themselves, and defence of their iniquities; while yet they abounded in murder, oppression, lies, craft,

* Jeremiah began to prophesy B. C. 629. Jerusalem was taken B. C. 588. An interval of nearly forty-one years.—*Townsend.*

practising of deceit, and manifest idolatry. Following the example of their fathers, who, under Manasseh and Ammon, one of whom in the beginning, the other all his life, maintained idolatry, had been the ringleaders to all abomination, such as in England are Winchester* and others.

The prophet of God, wondering at such manifest iniquity, judged that such ignorance and disobedience were only among the rascal sort of men; and therefore he says, "These be but poor ones, for lack of wisdom they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God; I will go to the nobles and talk with them, for they know the way of the Lord, and the judgments of their God." But what he findeth among that sort he declareth in these words, "They have all broken the yoke, and they have heaped sin upon sin, and mischief upon mischief; from the least unto the greatest they are all bent upon avarice, and they gape for lucre; from the priest to the prophet, every man dealeth deceitfully: behold, their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot listen to the word of God, it is a rebuke unto them, they delight not in it, they have committed abominable mischief, they cannot repent, neither think shame: they have denied the Lord, and said, 'It is not he,' that is, they have denied and opposed God's word, that it is not the truth, for they have said, We shall not see sword nor hunger." This was the obedience that the prophet found among the princes of Judah, as also among the common people. And is it not to be wondered at, that the vineyard that was so well manured brought forth no better grapes? They had a king most godly-minded, for so witnesses the Holy Ghost of him: "That there was no king that so truly turned to God with all his heart, with all his soul, and all his strength, according to all the law of Moses, as did Josiah." They had prophets most faithful and fervent, for Jeremiah was not alone. They were admonished by divers plagues; and the prophets constantly called for repentance, and yet nothing followed but open contempt of God and of his messengers. "Their repentance," says Hosea, "is like the morning dew, it abides not; although they can say, 'The Lord liveth,' yet are their oaths nothing but lies. Find me one man that doth equity and justice, and to him will I be merciful, saith the Lord." Here was narrow

* Bishop Gardiner.

inquisition among so great a multitude: great scarcity of good counsellors with so godly a king: for belike there were not many, when that He who knoweth the secrets of hearts so earnestly seeks for one man.

But ere we proceed further in this matter it shall be necessary to see how these circumstances agree with our state and time.

And first, that we had not God's word truly preached amongst us, none except an arrant and despiteful papist will deny. We had a king of such godly disposition towards virtue and the truth of God, that none from the beginning surpassed him;* and, to my knowledge, none of his years ever matched him in that behalf, if he might have been lord of his own will. In this time if sins abounded, let every man accuse his own conscience; for here I am not minded to specify all that I know; neither yet is it necessary, seeing some crimes were so manifest and heinous that the earth could not hide the innocent blood, neither yet could the heavens behold without shame the craft, the deceit, the violence, and oppression that universally were wrought; and in the mean season the hand of God was busy over us, and his true messengers kept not silence.

You know that the realm of England was visited with divers and great plagues, and whether it were not prophesied, that unless with more obedience we embrace God's word, the worst plagues were to follow—I appeal to the testimony of your own conscience.† But what ensued thereupon? alas, I am ashamed to rehearse it; universal contempt of all godly admonitions, hatred of them that rebuked vice, authorizing of them that could invent the most villainy against the preachers of God's word. In this matter I may be admitted for a sufficient witness; for I heard and saw, I understood and knew, with the sorrow of my heart, the manifest contempt and crafty devices of the devil, against those godly and learned preachers that this last Lent, anno 1553, were appointed to preach before the king's majesty, as also against all others whose tongues were not tempered with the holy water of the court; or,

* Edward VI.

† Knox and other faithful ministers had preached very faithfully in king Edward's reign, warning the people that judgments were at hand unless they repented and turned to the Lord with amendment of life.

plainly to speak, who could not flatter against their consciences, and say all was well, and that nothing needed reformation. What reverence and audience, I say, were given to the preachers this Lent by such as then were in authority, their own consciences declared—assuredly even such as by the wicked princes of Judah was given to Jeremiah. They hated such as rebuked vice, and stubbornly they said, We will not amend. And yet how boldly their sins were rebuked, even to their faces, such as were present can witness with me.

There was scarcely one that occupied the place but he did prophesy and plainly speak the plagues that are begun and assuredly shall end. Master Grindall plainly spoke of the death of the king's majesty; complaining of his household servants and officers, who neither were ashamed nor feared to rail against God's true word, and against the preachers of the same. The godly and fervent man master Lever plainly spake the desolation of the commonwealth, and the plagues which should shortly follow. Master Bradford, whom God, for Christ his Son's sake, comfort to the end, spared not the proudest, but boldly declared that God's vengeance should shortly strike those who then were in authority, because they abhorred and loathed the true word of the everlasting God; and, amongst many others, willed them to take example by the late duke of Somerset, who became so cold in hearing God's word, that the year before his last apprehension, he would go and visit his masons, and would not deign himself to go from his gallery to his hall to hear a sermon. "God punished him," said the godly preacher, "and that suddenly, and shall he spare you, that are doubly more wicked? No, he shall not, will ye or will ye not. Ye shall drink the cup of the Lord's wrath; the judgment of the Lord, the judgment of the Lord;" lamentably cried he, with weeping tears. Master Haddon most learnedly opened the causes of the by-past plagues, affirming that worse were to follow, unless repentance should shortly be found. These things, and much more, I heard spoken, after that the whole council had said, They would hear no more of these sermons, they were but indifferent fellows; yea, and some of them scrupled not to call them prating knaves. But now I will not speak all that I know; for if God continue my life in this trouble, I intend to prepare a dish for such as then led the ring in the

gospel. But now they have been at the school of Placebo,* and amongst ladies have learned to dance as the devil lists to pipe. I would they should consider, that He who has punished one will not spare the rest, if they are found alike wicked and treasonable.

But to our purpose: these things I judge sufficient to prove the whole multitude, and all estates in this our age, to have been, and yet to remain, alike wicked, if they are not worse, than those against whom Jeremiah did prophesy. Now let us see what followed in Judah; mischief upon mischief, while, finally, in the Lord's anger, he took away king Josiah, because he was determined to destroy Judah, as before he had destroyed Israel. After the death of this godly king great was the trouble, divers and sudden were the alterations of that commonwealth: the kings were taken prisoners one after another in a short space of time; and what other were the miseries of that stubborn nation, O God, for thy great mercies' sake never let thy final† and sore troubled flock within the realm of England prove nor learn by experience! But in all their troubles no repentance appeared, but the people were, more and more, bent upon idolatry, as by a sermon, and what ensued upon the same, made in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, is evident.‡ For the prophet was commanded by God to stand in the entrance of the Lord's house, and to speak to all the cities of Judah that came to worship in the house of the Lord; and was commanded to keep no word back, if peradventure, saith the Lord, they will hearken and turn every man from his wicked way. Here is to be noted, that immediately after the death of the good king they were entered into iniquity, from which God, by his prophets, laboured to call them back, before he began to plague them more extremely.

The tenour of the sermon was this, "Thus saith the Lord, If ye will not obey, to walk in my laws which I have given you, and to hear the words of my servants the prophets, whom I send to you, rising up betimes, and still sending; if ye will not hear them, I say, then will I do unto this house as I did unto Shiloh, and will make this city to be abhorred of all people in the earth. Hear not ye the words of the prophets that say unto you, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; I have not sent them, saith the Lord, howbeit they are bold to prophesy lies in my

* Of pleasing men. † Mortal. ‡ Jeremiah xxxvi.

name. If ye give ear unto them, both ye and your false prophets shall perish."* Here is just to be noted, as before we have touched, that immediately after the death of their king, whose study and earnest diligence was to root out all monuments of sedition and idolatry, the people after his death, I say, with whole consent, revolted back to idolatry; for such is the disposition of this our corrupt nature, that no religion can content or please us, except that which we ourselves have devised.

For like as the wisdom of the most wise earthly man in God's presence is nothing but foolishness, so are the ordinances of God in man's presence so naked and so bare, that man always thinketh he can devise a more perfect honouring of God, than that which himself has commanded: witness the Israelites in the desert; the ten tribes under Jeroboam; the Pharisees, and the rest of the sects in Christ's time; and the papists before and in our own time. For let any of them be demanded, How know ye that these your works, rules, and ceremonies please God, seeing ye have not his commandment to do the same? Straight they shall answer, They are laudable, they are honest, they are decent, they have good significations, they pleased our fathers, and the most part of the world use the same. And thus the corrupt children follow the footsteps of their forefathers into idolatry.

Secondly; It is to be noted and observed, that amongst them were false prophets; not that they were so known and esteemed of the people, no, they were holden to be the true church of God, for so they boasted themselves to be, that could not err. These false prophets were maintainers of idolatry, as Winchester, Durham, London, (I mean those members of the devil styled bishops of such places,†) are now in England, and yet they boldly promised to the people prosperity and good luck. Wherewith, and by whom, the people were so abused and blinded, that the words of Jeremiah were nothing regarded, as the consequence declared; for his sermon being ended, the priests, prophets, and whole people apprehended Jeremiah, and with one voice cried, "He shall die, he is worthy of the death." Great was the uproar against the poor prophet, in which, apparently, he could not have escaped, if the princes of Judah had not hastily come from the king's house unto the temple and taken

* Jeremiah xxvi. † Gardiner, Tonstall, and Bonner.

upon them the hearing of the cause; in which, after much debate, while some defended and some others most vehemently accused the prophet, the text saith, that the hand of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, was with Jeremiah, that he should not be given unto the hands of the people to be killed.

Although the prophet very narrowly escaped death, yet he ceased not from his office; but sometimes he complained unto God, and sometimes he admonished the people. To God he complains, saying, "Thou hast stricken them, O Lord, but they have not mourned. Thou hast destroyed them, but they have not received discipline. They have hardened their faces harder than stones, they will not convert. The whole land is wasted, but no man will weigh, ponder, or consider the cause. This people will not hear my word; they walk in the wicked intentions of their own hearts; they go after their gods to worship them." By these complaints, we may understand the fervency of the prophet to call the people back from their abominable idolatry. But what he profited may be understood by the words of his own friends, the men of Anathoth; for they plainly said unto him, "Speak no more unto us in the name of the Lord, lest you die in our hands." Belike these men had small delight in the doctrine of the prophets, or their exhortations. In conclusion, he was prohibited to enter into the temple, and so he might not preach; and then was he commanded by God to write his sermons, which he obeyed, and caused the same to be read openly in the temple (alas I fear a Baruch shall not now be found); afterwards the same sermons came to the ears of the council, and last to the king, and although in despite they were once burnt, yet Jeremiah was commanded to write again, and boldly to say, "Jehoiakim shall have no seed that ever shall sit upon the seat of David. Their carcasses shall be cast to the heat of the day, and to the frost of the night: and I shall visit, saith the Lord, the iniquity of him, of his seed, and of his servants; and I shall bring upon them, upon the indwellers of Jerusalem, and upon all the men of Judah, all the calamities that I have spoken against them." And although, when these words were spoken and written, they were so contemned that banqueting and feasting were proclaimed in his despite, yet no word of all his threatenings was spoken in vain: for after many plagues sustained by the mischievous father, the wicked miserable son, in the third month of his reign, was led

prisoner to Babylon. But when the time of their desolation approached, God stirred up over that wicked generation such a king, such priests, such prophets, as their own hearts wished; even such as should lead filthy dogs to their vomit again. Zedekiah was king, and such a one as long had resisted; poor Jeremiah had gotten by their hands the fearful whip of correction; Pashur and his companions led the king as they pleased up that Tophet, the hill altars smoked with incense. Baal and his belly gods, before the vengeance of God was poured forth upon them, got the day they long looked for. And, in conclusion, so horrible were the abominations of those days, that the Lord cried to his contemned people, (there were some that yet feared God:) "What has my beloved to do in my house, (meaning the temple of Jerusalem,) seeing that the multitude committeth in it abominable idolatry. They have provoked me to anger, burning incense unto Baal." Which great abominations, when God had shown, not only unto Jeremiah, but also to Ezekiel, then being at Babylon among the prisoners there, God moved those prophets to agree in one voice, that all Israel should be destroyed. For thus wrote Ezekiel; "Alas, upon all the abominations of the house of Israel; they shall fall by the sword, by pestilence, and by famine; he that is far off shall die of the plague; he that is near, shall die by the sword; he that is left, and besieged, shall die of hunger: and I shall complete my wrath upon them." And Jeremiah says, "Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldees, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who shall take it. The Chaldees, verily, shall enter into it, and they shall burn it with fire; they shall burn it, and the houses in which they burnt incense unto Baal." He proceeds, and gives the reasons and cause of God's plagues, saying, "The children of Israel, and the children of Judah, have done nothing from their youth but wickedness, even before my eyes, to provoke me to anger: they have turned to me their backs, and not their faces; they, their kings, their princes, their prophets, their priests, all Judah, and all the city of Jerusalem; they would not hear, nor be reformed. They have placed their doings," so termed he their abominable idols, "in the place that is consecrated unto my name, to defile it.

And when the king of Babylon was besieging the city, he said to the messengers of Zedekiah, who then had

sent to ask what should become of the city. "The Chaldeans shall take the city," says the prophet, "and shall burn it with fire. Yea if ye had slain all the host of the Chaldeans that besiege you, and if the slain be left, every man should rise in his tent, and should burn this city with fire: he that abides within the city, shall die either by sword, by hunger, or by pestilence, but he that shall go forth and fall to the Chaldeans, shall live and shall win his soul for a prey." Let a thing here be noted, that the prophet of God sometimes may teach [what some may call] treason against kings, and yet neither he nor such as obey the word spoken in the Lord's name by him, offend God. And yet the prophet speaks more plainly unto the king in secret asking his counsel; for this he says, "If suddenly thou shalt go forth and subdue thyself to the princes and chief captains of the Babylonians, thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be set on fire; but if you go not forth to the chief captains of the king of Babylon, this city shall be given over into the hands of the Chaldeans, who shall burn it with fire, neither yet shall you escape their hands."

These were plain admonitions, and thus, without flattery or fear, did the two prophets plainly and openly proclaim the desolation of that place, for such offences as have been already rehearsed. But how did such a message please the city of Jerusalem, and principally those delicate dames, that made sacrifice to the queen of heaven? Or how liked the priests, prophets, and princes of Judah those ambassadors? That we may know by his treatment and reward. I find shortly after this, Jeremiah was apprehended and cast into prison as a traitor; he was accused of sedition, and condemned for treason. Plain preaching was ever made against all that he had spoken before, and such felicity and good luck were promised to the people, that within two years Nebuchadnezzar's yoke should be broken from the necks of all people; and the vessels of the Lord's house, together with all the prisoners, should be brought again to Jerusalem. Had not these things some appearances of probability? Yes, verily they had. The king of Babylon had many enemies, and he was not able to resist them all; the people abounded in wine and oil; who then could say but that God was appeased with them? Their prophets maintained and authorized all that the people did, how could they then do wrong?

Now let us consider the prophet's part; Jeremiah had

spoken against the temple, saying it should be destroyed and made like to Shiloh, which the Lord formerly had destroyed, removing from them the ark of his covenant, principally for the iniquity of the priests. And was not this judged heresy, think you? No less, I warrant you, than now it is in England, to say, that all the doctrine of Winchester, and which his shavelings now maintain, is the doctrine of their father the devil, and therefore that it shortly shall provoke God's vengeance to strike all that adhere thereto. Jeremiah said, that Jerusalem should be set on fire and laid waste, unless Zedekiah should surrender himself into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. And was not this as great treason as to say that the city of London should be made a desert, if Jezebel be maintained in her authority? Jeremiah commanded openly all such as would avoid God's vengeance to leave the city of Jerusalem, and to seek the favour of their enemies. And was not this as great sedition as now to say that England shall be given over into the hands of strange nations? Jeremiah openly preached that the religion which they then used was devilish, although their forefathers had followed the same. And what is this else than to affirm, that general councils, and that which is called the universal church, is the malignant church and the congregation of antichrist? To be short, if men's judgments may have place, Jeremiah was a heretic, and more than a heretic, he was a seditious fellow, a seducer of the people; he was one that discouraged the hearts of the strong men of war; and he was unfriendly to that faith which Pashur and his companions taught the people; and therefore he was condemned to prison, and judged worthy of death; for the king could deny nothing to his promise. Amongst whom, I think, Pashur has been, as it were, chief chancellor, an old enemy he was to Jeremiah, by whom not only the king, but also the whole multitude of the people were so blinded, that boldly they durst cry, "No mischance shall come to us; we shall neither see pestilence, nor hunger; the king of Babylon shall never come against this city nor land."

Consider now, dear brethren, the condition of God's true prophet; what anguish was there in his heart, when not only his admonitions were contemned, but almost every creature was commoved against him to his destruction. In the midst of these stormy troubles, the prophet had no other comfort than to complain to his God, at

whose commandment he had spoken. And in his complaint he is so kindled against idolatry and their great unthankfulness, that he cries out as in anger, "O thou Lord of hosts, thou trier of the just, thou that seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance taken upon them, for unto thee have I referred my cause." As this prayer was most fearful to his enemies, if they had seen the efficacy thereof, so was the prophet assured thereby that God's wrath was kindled against that sinful and unthankful nation, and that it should not turn back till he had performed the cogitations of his own heart; which were either to call them back from idolatry, or else to bring upon them the plagues that he had threatened.

Hitherto have I recited the state of Judah before the destruction of Jerusalem, and subversion of that commonwealth; now I appeal to the conscience of any indifferent* man, in what one point differs the manners, state, and regimen of England, from the abuse and state related of Judah in those days, except that they had a king, a man of his own nature, as appeared, more facile than cruel, who sometimes was entreated in the prophet's favour, and also in some cases heard his counsel. And ye have a queen, a woman of stout stomach,† more stiff in opinion than flexible in the verity, who in no wise can abide the presence of God's prophets. In this one thing they disagree, in all other things they are so like, as one bean is like another. Their king was led by priests and false prophets. Who guides your queen is not unknown. Under Zedekiah and his council, the idolatry which was suppressed by Josiah came to light again. But more abominable idolatry was never in the earth, than that is which of late is now set up again by your pestilent papists among you. In Jerusalem, Jeremiah was persecuted and cast into prison for speaking the truth, and rebuking their idolatry. What prison within London tormented not some true prophet of God for the same causes? And O thou dungeon of darkness, where that abominable idol of late days was first erected, thou Tower of London I mean,‡ in thee are tormented more Jeremiahs than one, whom God shall comfort according to his promise, and shall reward their persecutors even as they have deserved: in which day also shall you tremble for fear, and such as

* Impartial. † Haughty spirit.—Queen Mary.

‡ After queen Mary's accession, the mass was first performed in the Tower.

pretend to defend thee shall perish with thee, because thou wast first defiled with that abominable idol.

Consider, dear brethren, if all these things be alike between England and Judah before the destruction thereof—yea, if England be worse than Judah was—shall we think that the Lord's vengeance shall sleep, man's iniquity being so ripe? No, dear brethren, he that has understanding must know the contrary, and he to whom the Lord's mouth has spoken must show the causes why the land shall be wasted. It may offend you that I call England worse than unthankful Judah. But if good reasons advanced and declared may take place, I fear not judgment. From Jerusalem many passed at the admonition of the prophet, leaving all that they had, rather than they would abide the danger of God's plagues that were threatened. God's prophets have threatened and declared many plagues to fall upon England, but I hear not of many that prepared to fly—God grant they repent not. In Jerusalem were princes and nobles that defended Jeremiah, and also did absolve him when he was accused and unjustly condemned by the pestilent priests. But how many of the nobility within England boldly speak now in defence of God's messengers is easy to be told! In Jerusalem the prophet of God had liberty to speak in maintenance of his doctrine. How such as seek to have the trial of their doctrine by God's word, have been and still are treated amongst you, is heard in strange countries. In Jerusalem was Ebedmelech, who boldly said to the king, that Jeremiah was injured by the false priests, and therefore obtained his liberty, when he was condemned to death. But in England there are none (God stir some) that dare put their hands betwixt the blood-thirsty lions and their prey: that is, betwixt these cruel tyrants that now are loosed from their dens, and the poor saints of God. In Jerusalem Jeremiah, being in prison, was daily fed upon the king's charges, and that when great scarcity of bread was in the whole city. In London, where all plenty abounds, are God's messengers permitted to hunger; yea, and ancient fathers so cruelly treated, that seldom has it been that thief or murderer has been so cruelly handled.

In these cases I do not blame you, beloved brethren, for I assuredly know your hearts do mourn for the troubles of your brethren, the faithful preachers; and that ye seek all means possible how they may be comforted and

released. But these things do I rehearse that you may see, that more abomination and less fear of God, more unjust dealing and less shame, more cruel persecution, and less mercy and gentleness is now among your chief rulers in the realm of England, than in those days were in Judea; and yet Jerusalem did not escape the punishment of God. Shall we then believe that England shall avoid the vengeance that is threatened? No, dear brethren. If idolatry continue as it is begun, England can no more escape God's vengeance than God himself may lose his justice. And therefore, dearly beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ, if profit to yourselves or your posterity may move you anything, then must ye avoid idolatry. For if the messengers of the Lord that shall be sent to execute his wrath and vengeance shall find you among idolaters, your bodies committing like abominations with them, you have no warrant that you shall escape the plagues prepared for the wicked. Almost the whole tribe of Benjamin perished with the adulterers, and yet they were not all adulterers in fact. (Judges xx.) All Amalek was commanded to be destroyed, and yet not one of them was living that troubled the Israelites in their passing from Egypt. Pharaoh was not drowned alone, (as in another treatise I have plainly written.) Neither yet escaped Jonathan, when God's vengeance punished Saul his father. And why? The apostle gives the answer. "Because," says he, "men knowing the justice of God, and doing the contrary, are worthy of death, not only they that commit iniquity, but also such as consent to the same." And who can deny but such men as daily do accompany wicked men, and yet never declare themselves offended nor displeased with their wickedness, do consent to their iniquity. But of this shall be spoken more plainly hereafter. And so yet once again I say, that if profit may move us, most profitable it shall be, yea, even for the body in this present life, to avoid idolatry; for if so we do, then God must be our Father, our portion, our inheritance, and defence. He promises, and will not deceive us, to carry us upon his own wings from all dangers, to feed us in the time of hunger, to plant us and our posterity in everlasting memorial, and, finally, to fight for us and save us from all miseries and shafts of satan.

But now to the subsequent; as it is most profitable to avoid idolatry, so is it so necessary, that unless we do so, we refuse to be in league with God, we show ourselves to

have no faith, and we deny to be witnesses unto God, and to his truth : and so must he, of his justice, expressed in his word, deny us to pertain to him or his kingdom. And then, alas, is the whole life of man but one heap of miseries, leading such as are not in league with God to perpetual damnation. This is the league betwixt God and us, that he alone shall be our God, and we shall be his people ; he shall communicate with us of his graces and goodness, we shall serve him in body and in spirit ; he shall be our safeguard from death and damnation, we shall stick to him, and shall fly from all strange gods. In making which league, we swear solemnly never to have fellowship with any religion, except with that which God has confirmed by his manifest word. If these things by God's scriptures are so plain, that no reasonable man can deny any one point of the same, then have I good hope that you will admit it to be necessary that idolatry be avoided, if the league betwixt God and us stand inviolate.

First, it is to be observed, that God's justice being infinite and immutable, requires like obedience in matters of religion of all them that are within his league, in all ages, that he requires of any one nation, or of any particular man, in any age before us. For all that are within his league are one body, as Moses doth witness, accounting men, women, children, servants, princes, priests, rulers, officers, and strangers within the covenant ; then it is plain that if one body, there must be one law ; so that whatever God requires of one, in that behalf, he requires the same of all, for his justice is immutable. What he condemneth in any one, the same he can neither absolve nor excuse in others ; for he is righteous without partiality. Then let us search, understand, and consider, what God required of that people, who sometime were in league with him, and what he commanded to be punished amongst them. Moses, the mouth of God to the Israelites, spake as follows : " If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy own bosom, or thy neighbour whom thou lovest as thy own life, shall privily solicit thee, saying, Let us go serve other gods, which thou hast not known, &c., obey him not, hear him not, neither yet let thy eye spare him, be not merciful unto him, hide him not, but utterly slay him ; let thy hand be first upon him, that such one may be slain, and then the hand of the whole people stone him with stones that he may die," &c.

And so likewise commandeth he to be done with a whole city, if the indwellers thereof turn back to idolatry; adding also that the whole city, and the spoil of the same, should be burnt, and that no portion thereof should be saved; neither yet that the city should be re-edified or builded again for ever, because it was accursed of God.

Do we esteem, beloved brethren, that the immutable God will wink at our idolatry as if he saw it not? seeing that he commanded judgment to be executed so severely against idolatry, and against such as only provoked or solicited to idolatry, that neither should blood nor affinity, multitude nor riches, save such as offended; neither yet that the husband should conceal the offence of his own wife, neither the father the iniquity of his son nor of his daughter, but that the father, husband, or brother should be first to accuse son, daughter, brother, or wife. And why? "Because he intended," saith Moses, "to bring thee from the Lord thy God, who led thee forth of the land of Egypt. And therefore let him die, that all Israel hearing may fear, and that thereafter they commit not such abomination in the midst of thee. Let nothing appertaining to such a man or city cleave unto thy hand, that the Lord may turn from thee the fierceness of his wrath, and be moved to have compassion over thee, and multiply thee as he has sworn unto thy fathers."

In these words are three things appertaining to our purpose chiefly to be noted. First, that the Holy Ghost pronounces and gives warning unto us, that maintainers of idolatry, and provokers to the same, intend to draw us from God; and therefore will he, that we neither obey them, be they kings or be they queens, neither yet that we conceal their impiety, were they son, daughter, or wife, if we will have the league to stand betwixt God and us. And here is the confirming of my first cause, why it is necessary that we avoid idolatry, for if we do not so, we declare ourselves to be without the league and covenant of God, for that league requires that we declare ourselves enemies to all sorts of idolatry.

Secondly, it is to be noted, that idolatry so incenses and kindles the wrath of God, that it is never quenched till the offenders, and all that they possess, are destroyed from the earth; for he commanded them to be stoned to death, and their substance to be burnt. Yea, and if a city offended, that it should be altogether destroyed without

mercy. This may appear rigorous judgment. But if you consider the cause, God's great mercy towards us shall be espied; for thereunto declares he himself an enemy to our enemies, because he would that we should understand how odious is idolatry in his presence, and how that we cannot keep the league betwixt him and us inviolate if we favour, follow, or spare idolatry. Lord, open our eyes that we may understand the great necessity of this thy precept. Amen.

Thirdly, it is to be noted, that obedience given to God's precepts in this case, is the cause why God shows his mercy upon us, why he multiplies us, and does embrace us with fatherly love and affection; whereby the contrary, by consenting to idolatry, by frequenting or favouring of the same, the mercies of God are shut up from us, and we are left without moisture, to wither as trees without sap; and then, alas, in what state stand we? In the same assuredly that Christ declares the unfruitful branches to be, which are cut from the stalk, wither, and are gathered in fagots to the fire.

O, dearly beloved, if we will stand in league with God, and be accounted the children of faith, we must follow the footsteps of Abraham, who, at God's commandment, left his native country, because it was defiled with idolatry. God gave to him but a commandment, saying, "Pass out of thy father's house," and he, without further reasoning, obeyed. And, alas, shall not so many precepts as are given to us to fly and avoid idolatry, move us, seeing that God shows himself so offended with idolatry, that he commanded all such to be slain without mercy? But now, shall some demand, What then? Shall we go to and slay all idolaters? That were the office, dear brethren, of every civil magistrate within his realm. But of you is required only to avoid participation and company of their abominations, as well in body as in soul; as David and Paul plainly teach unto you. David in his exile, in the midst of idolaters, saith, "I will not offer their drink offerings of blood, neither yet will I take their name in my mouth." And Paul says, "Ye may not be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils, ye may not drink the Lord's cup and the cup of devils." As these two places of God's most sacred scripture plainly resolve the former question, so do they confirm that which is before said, that the league betwixt God and us requires the

avoiding of all idolatry. Plain it is that in Gath, among the Philistines, where David was in exile, and in Corinth, to which place Paul wrote, were no small number of idolaters; yet neither saith David that he will slay any man in that place, neither yet gives Paul any such commandment. Whereof it is plain, that the slaying of the idolaters appertains not to every particular man. But in one thing they do both agree, that is to say, that such as have society and fellowship with God, must so abhor idolatry, that no part of their body be defiled therewith. For David says, "I will not take their names in my mouth;" as he would say, So odious are the names of false and vain gods, that the mention of them to the godly is like to stinking carrion, which neither can be eaten nor yet smelled without displeasure by such as have not their senses corrupted. And, therefore, I will neither give my presence before them, neither yet will I defile my mouth with them. David knew not such shifts as worldly wise men imagine now-a-days that they may keep their hearts pure and clean unto God, howbeit their bodies dance with the devil.* Not so, dear brethren, not so, the temple of God has nothing to do with idols. The cause David expresses in these words, "For the Lord himself is my portion, and mine inheritance." Great is the cause, if it be deeply considered. David, illuminated by the Holy Ghost, sees even the self-same thing that before we have alleged from the apostle's words, namely, that God will not part spoil with the devil, permitting him to have the service of the body, and God to stand content with the soul or mind. No, brethren, David states his principle why he will neither offer sacrifice to idols, nor yet defile his mouth with their names, "Because," saith he, "the Lord is my portion." As though he would say, "Such is the condition of the league betwixt the Lord and me, that as he is mine in my necessity, so must I be his, body and soul; for my God is of that nature, that he will suffer no portion of his glory to be given to another."

In confirmation of this, Isaiah the prophet, after he had rebuked the Jews for their idols and inventions, saith, "These are thy portion." And Jeremiah likewise in

* An opinion held by many who had been gospellers in the days of king Edward, and who afterwards outwardly professed popery to avoid persecution. Several letters of Bradford, Hooper, Latimer, and other Reformers condemn this practice.

mocking of them, says, "Let thy lovers deliver thee; call upon them, and let them hear thee! Thou hast committed fornication with them, and with stock and stone." The prophets meaning thereby that idolaters can have no league, no covenant with God, in so far as their hearts are alienated from him, which the service of their bodies testifies. And therefore God renounces such league and bond as before was offered, and permits them to seek water from hot burning coals. Hereof I suppose it to be plain, that like as God is immutable, who by his law has not only forbidden all fellowship with idolaters, but straitly has commanded also, that vengeance and punishment be taken on them;—as the saints of God were inspired with the Holy Ghost, who so refused all idolatry that they would not do so much honour to idols, as once to speak of them favourably;—and as the scriptures of God are infallible, which pronounce that God may not abide that our bodies serve the devil in joining ourselves with idolatry; so is it of mere necessity that both in body and soul we abstain from the same, if we will have the league to stand together betwixt God and us.

I will not answer at this time to any such objections as men that seek to live as they list do now-a-days invent, seeing that partly in another letter I have answered the same; and if God shall grant me any rest in this wicked life, by one occasion or other, I purpose, by God's grace fully to answer what can be said in their defence, which in very deed, when all is said that they can, they have said nothing that God will admit, unless they can persuade His Majesty to send down some new messenger to repel, retract, and call back all that is spoken in his law and gospel.

But we proceed: it now remains to show, that true faith and the confession of the same, necessarily require that the soul and body be clean from idolatry. It is not needful that I labour in the first, seeing that hardly any man denies it. But a perfect faith, as it cleanses the heart, so does it remove, and cast out from the same, superstition and abominable idolatry. But whether an inward faith requires an external confession, and that the body avoid idolatry, some, perchance, may doubt. To the one part the apostle answers, saying, "The heart believes unto justice,* but by the mouth confession is made to salvation." And David likewise, "I have believed and therefore have I

* Righteousness.

spoken, but I was sore troubled." In this place the voice of the Holy Spirit joins together faith and confession of the same: and therefore I dare not take upon me to sever them; but must say, that where true faith is, there is also confession of the same when necessity requires; and that where confession is absent, there true faith is asleep, or else, which is more to be feared, far from home. For like as eating, drinking, speaking, moving, and other operations of a living body, declare the body to be alive, and not to be dead; so does confession, at time convenient, declare the faith to be living. And as want of power to do any of the fore-named offices of the body declares the same either to be dead, or else shortly or assuredly to die; so, likewise, confession not given in due time makes manifest that the soul has no life by true faith.

But now it is to be considered, whether this present time requires that we give confession of our faith, and that we abstain from manifest idolatry. Our adversaries, who long have fought against Christ, have now, as they think, got the upper hand. They oppose the doctrine that we formerly confessed to be Christ's truth; and for a field of all abominations they have erected and set up that idol. What shall we do now, in this the battle for our Sovereign Lord? We are persuaded that all which our adversaries do is diabolical: shall we now come into the open presence of the people, and do even as the rest do? God forbid! for so doing we declare ourselves to be of the same mind and opinion with them; for neither do feet, hands, nor mouth declare the contrary. The feet carry the body to serve an idol. The eye beholds it with a certain reverence. The tongue speaks nothing to the contrary. Yea, the hands are extended to signify humble obedience. What greater signs can we give, that we have refused the fellowship of God, and have shaken hands with the devil; that we are empty and void of faith, and that we are replenished with the bitter gall of incredulity? Assuredly, I can perceive none greater, nor more evident.

But let me have no credit in this behalf, unless the same be proved by manifest, plain demonstration of God's word. The Lord our God, by his prophet Isaiah, saith to his people of Israel, "Ye are my witnesses, whether there be any God, but I alone. Is there any creature that I should not know him?" These words were spoken, as it were, to make an entrance, to rebuke idolatry, and the vain inven-

tions of the same; as though the Lord would say, "Thou house of Jacob, and ye the natural children descending of Abraham; yea, my people whom peculiarly I have chosen, by you to show to the world the magnificence of my name. And to that end have I spoken unto you things hidden from the beginning, that ye may understand and know that there is no knowledge but in me alone; and therefore I will, that ye, persuaded of my power and wisdom, testify the same to such as have not like understanding; and thus have I made you my witnesses." Hereof it is plain that of such as those to whom God granteth knowledge, he requires a confession to provoke the ignorant to embrace God and his word, or at the least to show them their vanity and blind foolishness. For so jealous is God over his gifts, that if we labour not to employ them to the glory of God, and to the profit of others, his creatures, he will, according unto the threatening of Jesus Christ, take the talent from us, and will give it to him that will labour thereupon. Nor shall it excuse us to allege that we can see no such fruit that our confession shall bring forth. Consider, dear brethren, that God is to be obeyed in his commandments, and the fruit and success is to be committed to him, whose wisdom is unsearchable. He commands us to refrain from idolatry; this precept ought we to obey, although present death should follow; for we are called as witnesses betwixt God and the blind world, as it is before said, "Israel, thou art my witness."

The question and debate stands undecided or resolved, whether the mass is God's true service, or idolatry? In this question or controversy we, to whom God has revealed his truth, are called for witnesses. When we crouch and kneel, when we beck and when we bow, and finally when we give, though it were only our presence before that idol, what witness bear we? Assuredly false witness against our neighbour. Against God, in so far as we honour an idol with our bodily presence, which is no small derogation to his glory in this time of his battle. Against our neighbour, for that we confirm ignorant men in error, to both our condemnation. But when we altogether refrain, we bear true witness and do our duty to God's glory; and therefore of necessity shall fruit ensue, how unapparent soever it be to us. Let no man judge that I am more rigorous and severe in requiring that we abstain from all idolatry than necessity requires. No, brethren,

I have learned always to contain and keep my affirmation within the bounds of God's Scriptures; and that shall Jeremiah the prophet witness, when writing to them that either then were prisoners in Babylon, or else that shortly should be prisoners for their offences. To whom the prophet gives his counsel and exhortation, after he had forbidden them in anywise to follow the vain religion of that people, by many reasons proving that their idols were no gods. At the last he says, "Ye shall say to them, The gods that made neither heaven nor earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heaven." Here is to be observed, as that singular instrument of God, John Calvin, most diligently notes, that the rest of the prophet's works were written in the Hebrew tongue, which then was peculiar to the Jews. But these words, above rehearsed, were written in the Chaldean tongue; in the tongue of that people among whom they were to suffer trouble; as though the prophet would compel them to change their natural tongue, and in plain words declare that hatred and alienation which they had against all idols, and worshippers of false gods.

Consider, dear brethren, what God required by his prophet, of his people, when they were in the midst of their enemies who were idolaters; will he not require the same of us, being in our own country, and amongst such as should be christians? If he be immutable he must require the same. And mark well the words of the prophet. He says not, Ye may think in your hearts that they are vain, and that they shall perish—but ye shall say it; and that shall ye do, not privately, but openly to them that put their trust in such vanity. As did the three children, denying boldly in the presence of a king, when a fearful death was prepared for them, to give the reverence of their body before any idol. And, also, Daniel would not keep secret the profession of his faith only thirty days, as in my other letter I have more plainly spoken, but he openly prayed, his windows being open, and his face turned towards Jerusalem; declaring thereby that the king's law and commandment, devised by his nobles, was wicked, and therefore it was not to be obeyed, but boldly to be contemned of all such as had faith towards God. And this he did not without great appearance of damage and trouble to follow; as if any of us should openly take that idol most abominable of all others, which now, alas, is worshipped by the

blind world,* and tread it under our feet, in presence of wicked Winchester and his fellow messengers and servants of the devil.

Therefore it is plain, that requiring you not to profane your bodies with idolatry, I require no more than God's most sacred Scriptures, by plain precepts and examples, teach unto us. And of every man, and at all times, I require not so much, for I constrain no man to go to idolaters in the time of their idolatry, and to say, Your gods made neither heaven nor earth, and therefore shall they perish and you with them, for all your worshipping is abominable idolatry;—but I require only that we absent our bodies, which are called by the apostle the temples of the Holy Ghost, from all such diabolical conventions; which that we do, is both profitable and necessary, no less to ourselves than to our posterity, of whom now in the end must we speak somewhat.

Every man that is not degenerated to the nature of brute beasts, will appear to bear such love to his children, that, to leave them rich and in good estate, he will patiently suffer troubles, and will do many things for the weal of his children, which otherwise were contrary to his pleasure. And I heartily wish that the perfection of this love were more deeply grounded in man's heart, I mean true love; not fond foolishness, which under the name of love procures the destruction of body and soul; whereas, on the contrary, true and perfect love most carefully labours for the salvation of both. If this love, I say, towards our children and posterity to come, which every man pretends to have, be in us, then of necessity it is that, for these causes, we avoid all society and fellowship with those foolish abominations. This, my assertion, may appear strong, but if it be impartially examined, it will be very easy to be understood. The only way to leave our children blessed and happy, is to leave them rightly instructed in God's true religion; for what avails all that is in the earth, if perpetual damnation follow death, yea, and God's vengeance also go before the same; as of necessity they must where the true knowledge of God is absent. Therefore God straitly commands the fathers to teach their sons his laws, ceremonies, and rites. And unto Abraham he opened the secret of his counsel touching the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. "Because," saith the

* The consecrated wafer used in the Romish sacrament.

Lord, "I know that Abraham will teach his children, that they serve my name." Then God would that the life and conversation of the fathers should be a schoolmaster to the children; and experience does so teach us, that the children are so bound and addicted to the works and practices of their fathers, and especially if it be in idolatry, that scarcely can the power of God speak, and by his own word, as the prophets oft complain, raise or pluck any back from their fathers' footsteps. Now if they, altogether refusing God, stoop under idolatry, what schoolmasters are ye to their posterity? Assuredly even such as the cruel and foolish fathers, that, consenting to Jeroboam and to his idolatry, left to their children a pattern of perdition. And what image show ye to your children, yea, in what estate leave ye them, both touching body and soul? blinded in idolatry, alas, I fear and tremble to pronounce it, and bond-slaves to the devil, without hope of redemption, or light to be received, before God takes vengeance upon their disobedience. Some will object, The Lord knoweth his own: true it is; but his ordinary means appointed by his eternal wisdom, to retain in memory his benefits and graces received, are nowise to be contemned. God commands you to teach your children his laws, statutes, and ceremonies, that they likewise may teach the same to the generations following. This his precept is to be obeyed, not only for the love of the children, which greatly ought to move you, but also for the reverence, the awe due to God's high majesty; whose precepts if ye contemn, ye and your posterity, to the third and fourth generation, shall be plagued, and shall lack the light of life everlasting. Be not deceived, flattering yourselves, beloved brethren, thinking that such a trumpet shall be blown to your posterity as has been blown unto you; if all come to close silence, as the messengers of the Lord found the beginning of this our age, when this whole realm of England was drowned in so deadly a sleep, that the sound of the Lord's trumpet was not understood; while at first the most part of the blowers gave their blood in a testimony that their doctrine was the same, which by blood was planted, by blood was kept in mind, and by blood did increase and fructify.

But will the Lord, think ye, have his messengers to fight alone, or will he bestow such abundance of blood upon your children to encourage them, as he did upon

you, for your instruction and encouragement, if you all so traitorously flee from him in this day of his battle? The contrary is to be feared.

Revolving how God has used my tongue (my tongue, I say, the most wicked as of myself) plainly to speak the troubles that are come, a certain admonition oft occurs to my mind, which God would I should commonly use in all congregations; the admonition was this, That the last trumpet was then in blowing within the realm of England, and therefore every man ought to prepare himself for battle. For if the trumpet should altogether cease, then should it never blow again, in the like power, within the said realm, till the coming of the Lord Jesus. Oh, dear brethren, how sorely these threatenings pierce my own heart this day, only God knoweth. And in what anguish of heart I write the same unto you, God shall declare when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. I wish myself to be accursed of God, as touching all earthly pleasures, for one year of that time which, alas, neither you nor I (God be merciful to us,) did righteously esteem when al abounded with us. I sob and groan, I call and pray, that in that point I may be deceived. But I am commanded to stand content, for it is God himself that performs the words of his own true messengers. His justice and order cannot be perverted.

The sun keeps his ordinary course, and starts not back from the west to the south; but when he goes down, we lack the light of the same, till he rise the next day towards the east again. And so is it with the light of the gospel, which has the day wherein it shines to realms and nations; which, if it be contemned, darkness suddenly follows, as Christ himself in his exhortation witnesses, saying, "While ye have the light believe in the light, that darkness apprehend you not. Labour while ye have the light." And Paul says, "This day if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts." And in divers other places, the time of the gospel being offered is called the day. And although this day be all time from Christ's incarnation or ascension to the heavens in his human nature, yet it is evident, that all nations at once, neither have had, neither at present have, the light of God's word offered and truly preached unto them. But some were and yet remain in darkness, when others had the light plainly shining, as God by his eternal wisdom has appointed the times. But,

on the contrary, most evident it is, that where the light of God's word, for the unthankfulness of men, has been taken away, there it is not to this day restored again; as witness all Israel, and all the churches of the Gentiles where the apostles first preached. What is in Asia?—ignorance of God. In Africa?—rejecting the very Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. What is there in the most notable congregations, where Christ Jesus was planted by Paul, and long after watered by others?—Mahomet and his false sect. Yea, and what is in Rome?—the greatest idol of all others, who, under the name of Christ, most cruelly persecutes Christ's true members. That adversary, that man of sin, who extolled himself above all that is called God.

Mark, brethren: has God punished the nations beforenamed, before us? not only the first offenders, but also their posterity to this day; and shall he spare us, if we be unthankful as they were, yea, if we be worse than they were? For of them no small number suffered persecution, banishment, slander, poverty, and finally death, for the profession of Christ. They having only this knowledge, that idols were odious before God, could neither for loss of temporal goods, for honours offered if they would obey, nor yet for the most cruel torments suffered in resisting, be persuaded to bow before idols. And, alas! shall we, after so many graces that God has offered in our days, for pleasure or for vain threatening of those whom our hearts know and our mouths have confessed to be odious idolaters, altogether without resistance, turn back to our vomit and damnable idolatry to the perdition of us and our posterity? Oh horrible to be heard! Shall God's holy precepts work no greater obedience in us? Shall nature no otherwise mollify our hearts? Shall not fatherly pity overcome this cruelty? I speak to you, O natural fathers; behold your children with the eye of mercy, and consider the end of their creation. Cruelty it were to save yourselves, and damn them! But oh, more than cruelty and madness that cannot be expressed, if, for the pleasure of a moment, you deprive yourselves and your posterity of that eternal joy which is ordained for them that continue in confession of Christ's name to the end! If natural life, fatherly affection, reverence of God, fear of torment, or yet hope of life, move you, then will ye withstand that abominable idol; which if ye do not, then, alas, the sun is gone down and the light is quite lost; the trumpet is ceased, and idolatry

is placed in quietness and rest. But if God shall strengthen you, as unfeignedly I pray his Majesty may, then is there but a dark cloud overspread the sun for a moment, which shortly shall vanish, so that the beams afterwards shall be sevenfold more bright and amiable than they were before. Your patience and constancy shall be a louder trumpet to posterity, than were the voices of the prophets that instructed you; and so is not the trumpet ceased so long as any boldly resist idolatry.

And, therefore, for the tender mercies of God, arm yourselves to stand with Christ in this his short battle. Let it be known to your posterity, that you were christians and not idolaters; that you learned Christ in time of rest, and boldly professed him in time of troubles. Think you these precepts are sharp and hard to be observed? And yet again, I affirm, that, compared with the plagues which assuredly will fall upon obstinate idolaters, they shall be found easy and light. For avoiding of idolatry you may perchance be compelled to leave your native country and realm; but obeyers of idolatry, without end, shall be compelled to burn in hell. For avoiding of idolatry your substance shall be spoiled; but for obeying idolatry heavenly riches shall be lost. For avoiding of idolatry you may fall into the hands of earthly tyrants; but obeyers, maintainers, and consenters to idolatry, shall not escape the hands of the living God. For avoiding idolatry your children shall be deprived of father, friends, riches, and of rest; but by obeying of idolatry they shall be left without the knowledge of his word, and without hope of his kingdom. Consider, dear brethren, how much more dolorous and fearful it is to be tormented in hell than to suffer trouble on earth; to be deprived of heavenly joy, than to be robbed of transitory riches; to fall into the hands of the living God, than to obey man's vain and uncertain displeasure; to leave our children destitute of God, than to leave them unprovided before the world. So much more fearful is it to obey idolatry, or by dissembling to consent to the same, than by avoiding and flying from the abomination, to suffer what inconvenience may follow thereupon; for the extremity of the one is but transitory pain, and the most easy of the other is to suffer in the fire that never shall have end.

I am not prejudicial* to God's mercies, as that such as

* Opposed.

repent shall not find grace; no, brethren, this I most assuredly know, that in whatsoever hour a sinner shall repent, God will not remember one of his iniquities; but although his offences were as red as scarlet, yet shall they be made as white as snow; and although in multitude they passed all number, yet shall they be blotted out, that none of them shall appear to the condemnation of the truly penitent. For such are his promises, that none truly believing in Christ Jesus shall enter into judgment; for the blood of Christ Jesus his Son cleanseth them from all sin, so that as far as the heaven is distant from the earth, so far does he remove the sins from the penitent. But consider, dear brethren, that these and the like promises, which are infallible, are made to the penitent sinners, and do nothing appertain to such as always contemn God's admonitions: and if you allege that God may call them to repentance, how profane and wicked soever men may be, I answer, that I acknowledge and confess God's omnipotence to be so free that he may do what pleases his wisdom; and yet his Majesty is not bound to all that our fancy requires; and likewise I acknowledge that God is so loving and so kind, that he performs the desire of those who fear him; and so there is no doubt but God may call to repentance. But this is greatly to be doubted, whether, if such as for pleasure of men, or for fear of temporal punishment, all their life deny Christ Jesus, defiling themselves with idolatry, shall, at their pleasure, be called to repentance. No such promises have we within the scriptures of God, but rather the express contrary. And therefore God is not to be tempted, but is to be heard, feared, and obeyed, when he calls us earnestly, and threatens not without cause. "Flee from idolatry, pass from the midst of them, O my people, that ye be not partakers of their plagues. How long will ye halt on both parts; ye may not be partakers of the Lord's cup and of the cup of devils. He that denies me before men, I will deny him before my Father. He that refuseth not himself, and takes not up his cross and follows me, is not worthy of me. No man putting his hand to the plough and looking backward, is worthy of the kingdom of God." And Paul to the Hebrews means this sin, when he says, that such as willingly sin after the knowledge of the truth, cannot be renewed again by repentance.

O, dear brethren, remember the dignity of our confes-

sion: you have followed Christ; you have proclaimed war against idolatry; you have laid hand upon the truth, and have communicated at the Lord's table; will you now suddenly slide back? Will you refuse God, and make a compact with the devil? Will you tread the most precious blood of Christ's testament under your feet? which assuredly you do as oft as ever you present your bodies amongst idolaters before that blasphemous idol. God, the Father of all mercies, for Christ his Son's sake, preserve you from that sore temptation, whose dolours and dangers sorrow will not suffer me to express!

But yet some will object, Peter the denier obtained mercy;—to whom I answer, A particular example makes no common law, neither yet is there any resemblance or likeness betwixt the fall of Peter and our daily idolatry. Peter, upon a sudden, without any former purpose, within a short space, thrice denied Christ; we, upon determinate purpose and devised mind, deny Christ daily. Peter had Christ's assurance and promise, that after his denial he should be converted; we have Christ's threatenings, that if we deny we shall be denied. Peter, in the midst of men of war, following Christ to the high priest's house, committed his offence for fear of present death; we, in our own households and cities, seeking the world, do no less, only for fear to lose wicked mammon. Peter, at the warning of the cock, and at Christ's look, left the company that provoked his sin; we, after Christ's admonition, after gentle exhortations, and severe threatenings, obstinately will continue in the midst of idolaters; and, for their pleasure, denying Christ Jesus. we will haunt and frequen abominable idolatry. What resemblance or likeness can now be found betwixt the fall of Peter and our daily idolatry, let every man judge. But much I wonder that men who can espy so narrowly, shift, as to seek with their father old Adam, the shade of a bush to hide them from God's presence; that also they cannot espy that Judas was an apostle, in presence of men once of no less authority and estimation than Peter was; that Cain was the first-born in the world; that Saul was the first anointed king over God's people, by the hand of the prophet, at God's commandment; and that Ahithophel was a man of such singular wisdom, that his counsel was holden as the oracle of God; and yet none of these found place of repentance. And have we any particular warrant within the

scriptures of God, that all our life we may be in league with the devil, and then that at our pleasure we may lay hand upon Christ Jesus, and, when we list, clothe us with his justice.* Be not deceived, dear brethren, for although it is most true, that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, yet like true it is that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, shall avoid and eschew all manifest iniquity: and that whosoever continues obstinately in iniquity, the same man calls not upon the name of the Lord, neither yet has God any respect to his prayer. And greater iniquity was never from the beginning than is contained in worshipping that abominable idol; for it is the seal of the league which the devil has made with the pestilent sons of antichrist, and is the very chief cause why the blood of God's saints has been shed near the space of a thousand years: for so long has it been almost in devising and decking with that harlot's garment, wherein now it triumphs against Christ, against the holy institution of his last Supper, against that only one sacrifice acceptable for the sins of all faithful believers. Which whole mass of iniquity you confirm, and in a manner subscribe with your hand, showing yourselves also consenting to the blood-shedding of all them that have suffered for speaking against that abomination, as oft as you honour that idol with your presence. And therefore avoid it, as you desire to have part with Christ, with whom you have sworn to die and live. Shame it were to break promise to man, but it is more shame to break it unto God: foolish it were to leave the king whose victory ye saw present, and to take part with him whom we understood to be so vanquished that neither might he withstand, nor yet abide the coming of his adversary.

O brethren, is not the devil, the prince of this world, vanquished and cast out? Has not Christ Jesus, for whom we suffer, made conquest of him? Has he not in despite of Satan's malice carried up our flesh into heaven? And shall he not return? We know that he shall, and that with expedition; when Satan and his adherents, idolaters, and the worshippers of that blasphemous beast, filthy persons and fearful shrinkers from the truth of God, shall be cast into the lake burning with fire which never shall be quenched. In the mean time you fear the death of the body; if nature admitted any man to live for ever, then had

* Righteousness.

your fear some appearance of reason. But if the death of the body be common to all, why will you jeopard to lose eternal life, to escape that which neither rich nor poor, neither wise nor ignorant, proud of stomach* nor feeble of courage, and, finally, no earthly creature, by any craft or disposition of man, did ever avoid. If any escaped the ugly face and horrible fear of death, it was those that boldly confessed Christ before men. Yet the flesh grudges for fear of pain and torment. Let it do its own nature and office; for so must it do while it is burdened with Christ's cross, and then no doubt God shall send comfort, that now we neither can feel nor understand.

But why ought the way of life to be so fearful by reason of any pain, considering that a great number of our brethren have past before us by like dangers as we fear? A stout and prudent mariner in time of tempest, seeing but one or two ships or vessels like his, pass through danger, and win a sure harbour, will have good experience by the like wind to do the same. Alas! shall ye be more fearful to win life eternal than the natural man is to save the life of the body? Have not the most part of the saints of God, from the beginning, entered into their rest by torment and troubles? of whom, as Paul witnesseth, some were racked, some hewn asunder, some slain with swords, some walked up and down in sheep skins; in need, tribulation, and vexation; in mountains, dens, and caves of the earth! and yet what complaints find we in their mouths, except it be the tormenting of their persecutors? Did God comfort them, and shall his Majesty despise us? If in fighting against iniquity we will follow their footsteps, he will not, for he has promised the contrary. And therefore, be of good courage, the way is not so dangerous as it appears; prepare in time and determine with yourselves to abide with Christ Jesus, and his cross shall never press you as at present ye fear. And, therefore, dearly beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ, as you would avoid the grievous vengeance to come, that shortly and assuredly will strike all obstinate idolaters; as you desire to have the league betwixt God and you to stand sure and inviolate; and as you would leave the true knowledge of God in possession to your children; flee from idolatry, and stand with Christ Jesus in this day of his battle, which shall be short and the victory everlasting. For the Lord himself

* High spirited.

shall come in our defence with his mighty power; he shall give us victory where the battle is most strong, and he shall turn our tears into everlasting joy. He shall confound our enemies with the truth of his mouth, and shall let us see the destruction of them that now are most proud, and that most pretend to molest us: from God alone we wait for redemption.

The God of all comfort and consolation, for Christ Jesus his Son's sake, grant that this my plain admonition, yea, rather the warning of the Holy Ghost, may be received and accepted of you, with no less joy and obedience than I have written it unto you with unfeigned love and sorrowful heart. And I doubt not but both you and I shall be comforted, when all such as molest us shall tremble and shake by the coming of our Lord Jesus: whose omnipotent Spirit keep you undefiled, body and soul, to the end. Amen.

The peace of God rest with you all. From a sorely troubled heart, upon my departure from Dieppe, 1553,* whither God knoweth. In God is my trust through Jesus Christ his Son, and therefore I fear not the tyranny of man, neither yet what the devil can invent against me. Rejoice ye faithful, for in joy shall we meet where death may not dissever us.

Your brother in the Lord,
JOHN KNOX.

* 1554, according to the new style.

A

FORT FOR THE AFFLICTED;

OR,

AN EXPOSITION UPON THE SIXTH PSALM OF DAVID.

Wherein are ministered many notable and excellent remedies against the storms of tribulation, written chiefly for the comfort of Christ's little flock, which is the small number of the faithful.—John xvi.

BY JOHN KNOX.

Wherein is declared his cross, complaints, and prayers; most necessary to be read of all them, for their singular comfort, who, under the banner of Christ, are assaulted by Satan, and feel the heavy burden of sin with which they are oppressed.

The patient abiding of the sorely afflicted was never yet confounded.

Written in 1554.

On Knox's arrival at Dieppe, in January 1554, he transmitted to England two short treatises. The one was an Exposition of the sixth Psalm, which he had begun to write in England at the request of Mrs.Bowes, his mother-in-law, but had not found leisure to finish. It is an excellent practical discourse upon that passage of scripture, and will be read with peculiar satisfaction by those who have been trained to religion in the school of adversity.—*M'Crie's Life of Knox.*

AN

EXPOSITION

UPON

THE SIXTH PSALM OF DAVID;

WHEREIN ARE DECLARED HIS CROSS, COMPLAINTS, AND PRAYERS; NECESSARY TO BE READ, FOR THEIR SINGULAR COMFORT, BY ALL THEM WHO, UNDER THE BANNER OF CHRIST, ARE, BY SATAN, ASSAULTED, AND FEEL THE HEAVY BURDEN OF SIN WITH WHICH THEY ARE OPPRESSED.

The patient abiding of the sorely afflicted was never yet confounded.

To his beloved Mother, John Knox sendeth greeting, in the Lord.

The desire that I have to hear of your continuance with Christ Jesus, in the day of this his battle, which shortly shall end to the confusion of his proud enemies, I can neither express by tongue nor by pen, beloved mother. Assuredly it is such that it vanquishes and overcomes all remembrance and solicitude, which the flesh uses to take for feeding and defence of itself; for in every realm and nation God will stir up some one or other to minister things that appertain to this wretched life; and if men cease to do their office, yet he will send his ravens; so that, in every place, perchance I may find some fathers to my body. But, alas! where I shall find children to be begotten unto God by the word of life, that can I not at present consider. And therefore the spiritual life of such as sometime boldly professed Christ is, to my heart, more dear than all the glory, riches, and honour on earth.

And the falling back of such men as I hear daily turn back to that idol* again, is to me more dolorous than, I trust, the death of the body shall be, whenever it shall

* The romish mass.

come at God's appointment. Some will ask then, Why did I fly? Assuredly I cannot tell. But of one thing I am sure, the fear of death was not the chief cause of my flying. I trust the one cause has been, to let me see with my bodily eyes that all had not a true heart to Christ Jesus, who, in the day of rest and peace, carried a fair face. But my flying is no matter;—by God's grace I may come to battle before all the conflict be ended. And haste the time, O Lord, at thy good pleasure, that once again my tongue may praise thy holy name, before the congregation, if it were but in the very hour of death.

I have written a large treatise concerning the plagues which assuredly will come upon obstinate idolaters,* and those also who, dissembling with them, deny Christ by obeying idolatry, which I would you should read diligently. If it come not to you from the south, I will provide that it shall come to you by some other means. Touching your continual trouble, given unto you by God for better purpose than we can at present perceive, I have begun for you the exposition of the sixth psalm, and as God shall grant unto me opportunity and health of body, which now is very weak, I purpose to complete the same.

The Argument.

It appears that David, after his offences, fell into some great and dangerous sickness, in which he was sorely tormented, not so much by bodily infirmities as by sustaining and drinking a large portion of the cup of God's wrath. And although he was delivered at that time from the death of the body, yet it appears, that long after, yea, and I verily believe all his life, he had some sense and remembrance of the horrible fear which he suffered in the time of his sickness, and therefore the Holy Ghost, speaking in him, shows unto us what are the complaints of God's elect under such crosses; how diversely they are tormented; how they appear to have no sure hold of God, but to be cast out from him. And yet what are the signs that they are God's elect? And so doth the Holy Ghost teach us to seek help of God, even when he is punishing and appearing to be angry with us.

* His letter to the faithful in London, &c.

The Psalm.

O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, nor chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

David, sorely troubled in body and spirit, with lamentation prays unto God, which, that we may the better understand, I will attempt to express it in more words. David speaks unto God, as he would speak unto a man, in this manner: "O Lord, I feel what is the weight and strength of thy displeasure. I have experienced how intolerable is the heaviness of thy hand, which I, most wretched man, have provoked against myself by my horrible sins. Thou whippest me and scourgest me bitterly, yea, so thou vexest me, that, unless thou withdraw thy hand and remit thy displeasure, there remaineth nothing unto me but utterly to be confounded. I beseech thee, O Lord, be not angry, neither be commoved against me above measure, remit and take away thy heavy displeasure, which, by my iniquity, I have provoked against myself." This appears to have been the meaning of David in his first words, whereby he declares himself to have felt the grievous wrath of God before he burst forth in these words.

In which, First, is to be noticed, that the prophet acknowledges all trouble that he sustains, as well in body as in spirit, to be sent of God, and not to happen unto him by chance. For herein the sons of God peculiarly differ from the reprobate. The sons of God know that both prosperity and adversity are the gift of God only, as Job doth witness; and, therefore, in prosperity commonly they are not insolent nor proud, but even in the day of joy and rest they look for trouble and sorrow. Neither, yet, in the time of adversity are they altogether left without comfort, but by one mean or other God shows unto them that trouble will have an end; where contrariwise, the reprobate, either taking all things as of chance, or else making an idol of their own wisdom, in prosperity are so puffed up that they forget God, without any care that trouble should follow; and in adversity they are so dejected, that they look for nothing but hell. Here must I put you in mind, dearly beloved, how oft you and I have talked of these present days, till neither of us could refrain from tears, when no appearance of them was seen by man.

How oft have I said to you, that I looked daily for trouble, and that I wondered that I escaped it so long. What moved me to refuse, and that with displeasure, of all men, even of those who best loved me, those high promotions which were offered by him, whom God hath taken from us for our offences ?* assuredly the foresight of trouble to come. How oft have I said, the time would not be long that England would give me bread. Refer to the last letter which I wrote unto your brother-in-law, and consider what is therein contained. While I had this trouble, you had the greater; sent, I doubt not, to us both of God, that, in that great rest, and, as we call it, when the gospel triumphs, we should not be so careless and so insolent as others were, who, although they professed Christ in their mouths, yet they sought nothing but the world, with hand, with foot, with counsel, and wisdom. And although at this present hour comfort appears not, yet, before all the plagues are poured out, it will be known that there is a God who taketh care for his own.

Secondly, is to be noted, that the nature and disposition of the true sons of God in the time of their trouble, is to impute unto God some other affection than there is, or can be in him, towards his children, and sometimes to complain against God, as though he did those things which, in very deed, he cannot do to his elect. David and Job often complained that God had left them; was become their enemy; regarded not their prayers; and took no heed to deliver them; and yet it is impossible that God should either leave his chosen, or that he should despise the humble petitions of such as implore his support. But such complaints are the voice of the flesh, wherewith God is not offended so as to reject his elect, but pardons them among their other innumerable sins and infirmities; and therefore, beloved, despair not, although the flesh sometimes burst forth into heavy complaints, as it were, accusing God. You are not more perfect than were David and Job; and you cannot be so perfect as Christ Jesus himself was, who, upon the cross, cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Consider, dear mother, how lamentable and horrible were those words to the Son of God. And David, in the eighty-eighth psalm, which, for the better understanding, I desire you to read,

* King Edward the sixth is reported to have offered Knox a bishopric.

complains unto God, that, night and day, he had cried, and yet he was not delivered; "But," saith he, "my soul is filled with grief; I am as a man without strength; I am like unto those that are gone down to the pit, of whom thou hast no more mind; like unto those that are cut off by the hand: thou hast put me into a deep dungeon, all thy wrath lieth upon me. Why leavest thou me, Lord? Why hidest thou thy face from me? Thou hast removed all my friends from me; thou hast made me odious unto them." And thus he endeth his psalm and complaint, without mention of any comfort received.

And Job, in divers places of his book, makes even the same complaints; sometimes saying that God was his enemy, and had set him, as it were, for a mark to shoot at, and, therefore, that his soul desires actual destruction. These things I recite unto you, dearly beloved, understanding what have been your troubles heretofore, and knowing that satan will not cease now to persuade your tender conscience that none of God's elect have been in like case as you are. But by these precedents, and many other places, which I have no opportunity now to collect, it plainly appears that God's chosen children have suffered the like temptations. I remember that you have often complained of the grudging and murmuring that you find within yourself, fearing that it provoked God to more displeasure. Behold and consider, dear mother, what God has borne with in his saints before; will he not bear the same with you, being most sorry for your imperfections? He cannot do otherwise. But as his wisdom hath made us all of one mass and nature—earth and earthly, and as he hath redeemed us with one propitiation—the blood of his only Son, so must he, according to his promise, alike mercifully pardon the offences of all those who pray in the name of the Lord Jesus; those, I mean, that refuse all other justice* but his alone.

But to our matter: from these things it is plain that God's elect, before you, have suffered the like cross as at present you suffer; that they have complained as you complain; that they have thought themselves cast off as you have thought, and yet may still think yourself to be; and yet, nevertheless, they were sure in God's favour. Hope, dear mother, and look you for the same; hope, I say, against hope: how horrible the pain to suffer the cross

* Righteousness.

none can express, except such as have proved it; fearful it is for the very pain itself, but most fearful it is for that the godly, so tormented, judge God to be angry, in fury, and to rage against them, as is before expressed.

Seeing we have found this cross appertains to God's children, it shall be profitable and necessary to search out the causes of the same. Plain it is that not only God worketh all to the profit of his elect, but also that he worketh it of such love toward them, and with such wisdom, that otherwise things could not be. And to understand this is very profitable, partly to satisfy the grudging complaints of the flesh, which, in trouble, commonly questions, Why doth God this or that? And although the flesh in this earth can never be fully satisfied; but even as hunger and thirst, from time to time, assault it, so do other more gross imperfections; yet the inward man which sobbeth unto God, knowing the causes why the very just* are so troubled and tormented in body and spirit in this life, receives some comforts, and obtains some stay on God's mercy, by knowing the causes of the trouble. All causes I may not recite, but two or three of the principal I will touch upon.

The first is, to provoke in God's elect a hatred of sin, and unfeigned repentance of the same; which cause, if it were rightly considered, were sufficient to make all spiritual and corporeal troubles tolerable unto us; for seeing that without repentance no man attains unto God's mercy, (for it is now appointed by him whose wisdom is infinite, of those that are converted to the feeling of sin,) and that without mercy no man can come to joy: is not that which causes us to understand what repentance is, gladly to be received and embraced? Repentance contains within it a knowledge of sin, sorrow for it, and a hatred of it, together with a hope of mercy. It is very evident that God's own children have not, at all times, the right knowledge of sin, that is to say, how odious it is before God; much less have they the sorrow for it, and hatred of it, which if they had, as they could not sin, so should they never be able, having that same true sense of God's wrath against sin, to delight in any thing that appertains to the flesh. . . And therefore God, for such purposes as are known to himself, sometimes suspends from his own children this sense and feeling of his wrath against sin;

* Truly righteous.

as no doubt he did with David, not only before his sin, but also a certain time after.

But lest the sons and daughters of God should become altogether insolent, like the children of this world, his holy Majesty sends unto them some portion of this aforesaid cup, in drinking which they come to such knowledge as they never had before. For, first, they feel the wrath of God working against sin, whereby they learn the justice of God to be even such as he himself pronounces; that he may suffer no sin to be unpunished. And thus begin they to mourn for their offences, as well as to hate the same, which otherwise they could never do; for nothing is so pleasing to this corrupt nature of man as sin: and things pleasing to nature, nature of itself cannot hate. But, as in this conflict God's children feel torment, and that most grievous; as they mourn, and by God's Holy Spirit begin to hate sin, so they come also to a more high knowledge; which is, that man cannot be a saviour to himself; for how shall he save himself from hell, who cannot save himself from anguish and trouble here in this flesh, while he yet has strength, wit, reason, and understanding? And therefore must he be compelled in his heart to acknowledge, that there is another Mediator betwixt God's justice and mankind, than any that ever descended of the corrupt seed of Adam; yea, than any creature who only is a creature. And by the knowledge of this Mediator, at last the afflicted attain some sense and lively feeling of God's great mercies declared unto mankind, although they are not so sensibly felt as the pain is. And although that torment, by this knowledge, is not hastily removed, yet the patient has some hope that all sorrow shall have an end; and that is the cause why he sobbeth and groaneth for an end of pain; why also he blasphemeth not God, but crieth for his help, even in the midst of his anguish. How profitable this is to the children of God, and what it works in them, as the plain scripture teaches, so experience makes us understand. Verily even so profitable is it to mourn for sin, and to hate the same; to know the Mediator betwixt God and man; and, finally, to know his free love and mercy towards them; so necessary is it to drink this aforesaid cup. What it worketh in them none know but such as taste it. In David it is plain that it wrought humility and casting down of himself; it took from him the great trust that he had in himself; it made him daily

to fear, and earnestly to pray, that he should not afterwards offend in like manner, or be left in his own hands; it made him lowly, although he was a king; it made him merciful when he might have been rigorous; yea, it made him mourn for Absalom his wicked son.

But to the rest of the causes. The second cause why God permits his elect to taste of this bitter cup is, to raise up our hearts from these transitory vanities; for so foolish and so forgetful are we, and so addicted to the things that are present, that, unless we have another schoolmaster than human reason, and some other spur and perpetual remembrance than any which we can choose, or devise ourselves, we neither can assign, nor yet rightly remember, the departure from this vain and wicked world, to the kingdom that is prepared. We are commanded daily to pray, "Thy kingdom come;" which petition asks that sin may cease; that death may be devoured; that transitory troubles may have an end; that satan may be trodden under our feet; that the whole body of Christ Jesus may be restored to life, liberty, and joy; and that the powers and kingdoms of this earth may be dissolved and destroyed; and that God the Father may be all in all things, after that his Son Christ Jesus hath rendered up the kingdom for ever. For these things are we all commanded to pray; but which of us, in the time when all abounds with us, when neither body nor spirit has trouble, from our heart, and without dissimulation, can wish these things. Verily, now with our mouths we may speak the words; but the heart cannot trust the things to come, except we are in such a strait that worldly things are unsavoury unto us; and so they neither can nor ever will be but under the cross. Nor yet under all kinds of crosses are worldly things unpleasant; for, in poverty, riches greatly delight many; for although they lack them, yet they desire to have them, and so are they neither unsavoury nor unpleasant; for things that we earnestly covet are not unpleasant unto us. But when things appertaining unto the flesh are sufficiently ministered unto us, and yet none of them can mollify our anguish or pain, then the heart sobbeth to God, and unfeignedly wishes an end of misery. And, therefore, our heavenly Father, of his infinite wisdom, to hold us in continual remembrance that in this wretched world there is no rest, permits and suffers us to be tempted and tried with this cross, that with an unfeigned heart we may desire not only an end of our troubles, for that shall

come by death, but also of all the troubles of the church of God; which shall be before the second coming of our Lord Jesus.

The third cause I collect of Moses' words to the Israelites, saying, "The Lord thy God shall cast out these nations by little and little before thee; he will not cast them out all at once, lest, perchance, the wild beasts be multiplied against thee. And also when thou shalt enter into that land, and shalt dwell in the houses which thou never buildest, and that thou shalt eat and be filled, give thanks unto the Lord thy God, and beware that thou forget him not; and that thou say not in thy heart, The strength of mine own hand hath brought these great riches unto me." In these words are two things pertaining to our matter most worthy to be noted. First, that Moses saith, that the Lord will not at once, but by little and little, destroy those nations, adding the cause, lest, perchance, (saith he,) the wild beasts be multiplied, and make uproar against thee. The second, that when they had abundance, then they should declare themselves mindful of God's benefits, and that they should not think their own power, wisdom, or provision was any cause that they had the enjoyment of those advantages.

By these things, the Holy Ghost teaches them, that like as they did not possess nor obtain the first entrance of that land by their own strength, but that the Lord God freely gave it to them, so likewise were they not able to brook* or enjoy the same by any power of themselves. For although God should have, in one moment, destroyed all their enemies, yet, if he should not have been their perpetual safeguard, the wild beasts would have troubled them. And if they had demanded the question, Why will you not destroy the wild beasts also? he answers, Lest thou forget the Lord thy God, and say in thy heart, My strength hath obtained this quietness to myself. Consider, dearly beloved, that such things as the Spirit of God foresaw to be dangerous and damnable unto them, the same things are to be feared in us; for all things came unto them by figures.† They were, in Egypt, corporeally punished by a cruel tyrant; we were in spiritual bondage of the devil by sin and unbelief. God gave to them a land that flowed with milk and honey, for which

* Sustain, retain.

† Happened unto them for ensamples. 1 Cor. x. 11.

they never laboured; God has opened to us the knowledge of Christ Jesus, which we never deserved, nor yet hoped for. They were not able to defend the land, after they were possessed of it; we are not able to retain ourselves in the true knowledge of Christ Jesus, but by his own grace only. Some enemies were left to exercise them; sin is left in us that we may learn to fight. If there had not been enemies, wild beasts would have multiplied amongst them; if such beasts as we think most trouble us were not permitted so to do, worse beasts would have dominion over us; that is, namely, trust in ourselves, arrogance, oblivion, and forgetfulness of that estate from which God hath delivered us, together with a light estimation of all Christ's merits; which sins are the beasts that, alas, devour no small number of men. Neither yet let any man think, that if all kinds of crosses were taken from us during the time we bear the earthly image of Adam, that we should be more perfect in using the spiritual gifts of God, namely, the remission of sins, his free grace, and Christ's righteousness, for which we never laboured, than that people would have been in using of those corporeal gifts.

And Moses saith unto them, Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God. He who knoweth the secrets of hearts giveth not his precepts in vain. If man's heart had not been prone and ready to forget God, and to glory in his own strength, God had not given this precept, and repeated it so diligently; for his Majesty neither doeth nor speaketh in vain. But knowing what things are most able to blind and deceive man, the wisdom of our God, by his contrary precepts, gives him warning of the same. Experience has taught us how such beasts have troubled the church of God, to speak nothing of the time of the prophets, of the apostles, or of the primitive church. What trouble Pelagius made by his heresy, affirming that man, by natural power and free will, might fulfil the law of God, and deserve for himself remission and grace.* And to come a little nearer to our own age, hath it not been openly preached and affirmed in schools, and set out by writings, that faith alone doth not justify, but works do also justify? Hath it not been taught that good works may go before

* Pelagius was a British monk; he denied original sin, and taught that men might be saved by their own works. His heresy began to appear at the commencement of the fifth century.

faith, and may induce God to give his graces? What hath been taught of men's merits, and of the works of supererogation? Some openly affirming, that some men have wrought more good works than were necessary to their own salvation. I pray you, consider if these men said not, Our hand and our strength have given these things unto us. What were these devilish heresies, and others that have infected the whole papistry? Assuredly they were cruel and ravenous beasts, able to devour the souls of all those upon whom they get the upper hand. But the merciful providence of our gracious God, willing our salvation, will not suffer us to come to that unthankfulness and oblivion. And therefore here he permitteth us, with his apostle Paul, to be buffeted of our enemies, to the end that we may mourn for sin, and hate the same; that we may know the only Mediator, and the dignity of his office; that we may unfeignedly long for the coming of our Lord Jesus. And that we neither be presumptuous, lightly esteeming Christ's death, nor yet unmindful of our former estate and miseries. And so this cup is, as it were, a medicine prepared by the wisdom of our eternal Physician, who alone knoweth the remedies of our corrupt nature.

Advert and mark, dear mother, that all comes to us for our most singular profit. It is a medicine, and therefore for the time it cannot be pleasing. But how gladly when the body was sick, would we use, and receive, and drink the medicine which would remove sickness and restore health, how unpleasant and bitter soever it was! But Oh, how much more ought we, with patience and thanksgiving, to receive this medicine of our Father's hand, which, his Holy Spirit so working the same, removes many mortal diseases from our souls; such as pride, presumption, contempt of grace, and unthankfulness; which are the very mortal diseases, that, by unbelief, slay the soul; and restores unto us lowliness, fear, invocation of God's name, remembrance of our own weakness, and of God's infinite benefits, by Christ received; which are very evident signs that Jesus Christ lives in us. What signs and tokens of these things have appeared in you, and in others that are in your company, since your first profession of Christ Jesus, it needs not to rehearse. God grant that the eyes of men be not blinded to their own perdition.

But to our purpose: dearly beloved, accept this cup from the hands of our heavenly Father, and although your

pains are almost intolerable, yet cast yourself, because you have no other refuge, before the throne of God's mercy, and, with the prophet David, being in like trouble, say unto him, "*Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak! Lord, heal me, for all my bones are vexed!*"

Then David proceeds in his prayer, adding certain causes why he should be heard, and obtain his petitions. But first we will speak of his prayers, as they are in order throughout this whole psalm. David desires four things in this his vehement trouble. In the first verse, he asks, that God would not punish him in his heavy displeasure and wrath. In the second verse, he asks, that God should have mercy upon him, and in the third verse he desires that he should heal him, and in the fourth verse, he asks that God should return unto him, and that he should save his soul. Every one of these things was so necessary unto David, that lacking any one of them, he judges himself most miserable. He felt the wrath of God, and therefore desired the same to be removed. He had offended, and therefore desired mercy. He was fallen into most dangerous sickness, and therefore he cried for bodily health. God appeared to be departed from him, and therefore he desired that the comfort of the Holy Ghost should return unto him. And thus was David, not as the most part of men commonly are, who, in their prayers, usually, and of custom oftentimes, do ask with their mouths such things as their hearts do not greatly desire to obtain.

But let us mark principally what things are to be noted in these his prayers, which he, with earnest mind, poured forth before God. It is evident, that David in these his prayers sustained and felt the very sense of God's wrath; and also that he understood clearly that it was God only that troubled him, and had laid that sore scourge upon him. And yet he sought support or aid nowhere but from God alone, who appeared to be angry with him. This is easy to be spoken, and the most part of men will judge it but a light matter to flee to God in their troubles. I confess, indeed, that if our troubles come by man's tyranny, then the most sure and most easy way is to run to God for defence and aid. But if God appear to be our enemy, to be angry with, and to have left us, how hard and difficult it is then to call for his grace and for his assistance none knows, except such as have learned it by experience, neither yet can any man so do, except the

elect children of God. For so strong are the enemies who, with great violence, invade the troubled conscience in that troublous battle, that unless the hidden seed of God should make them hope against hope, they could never look for any deliverance or comfort. The flesh lacketh not reasons and persuasions to bring us from God. The devil, by himself and by his messengers, dares boldly say and affirm that we have nothing to do with God. And a weak faith is often compelled to confess both the accusations and reasons to be most true.

In time of trouble, the flesh reasons thus—O wretched man, perceivest thou not that God is angry with thee, he plagueth thee in his hot displeasure, therefore it is in vain for thee to call upon him. The devil, by his suggestion or by his ministers, amplifies and aggravates these things already mentioned, affirming his assertions, and beating them into the conscience of the sorely afflicted in this manner—God plagueth thee for thy iniquity, thou hast offended his holy law, therefore it is labour lost to cry for mercy or relief; for his justice must needs take vengeance upon all disobedient offenders. In the mean season, a weak faith is compelled to confess and acknowledge the accusations to be most true; for who can deny that he has deserved God's punishments? The flesh feels the torments, and our weakness cries out that all is true, and no point can be denied.

The vehemence of this battle may be plainly espied in the account of the sickness of Hezekiah, and in the history of Job. Hezekiah, after he had, with lamentable tears, complained that his life was taken away, and cut off before his time; that violence was done unto him, and that God had bruised all his bones like a lion, at last he saith, "Be thou surety for me, O Lord;" but immediately upon these words, as it were correcting himself, he addeth, "What shall I say, it is he that hath done it!" as if he had said, to what purpose complain I to him? If he had any pleasure in me, he would not have treated me in this manner: it is he himself, who I thought should have been my surety and defender, that hath wrapped me in all this wretched misery: he cannot be angry and merciful at once, (so judgeth the flesh,) for in him there is no contrariety. I feel him to be angry with me, and therefore it is vain that I complain or call upon him. This, also, may be perceived in Job, who, after that he was accused by his

friends, as one that had deserved the plague of God; and after that his wife had willed him to refuse all justice, and to curse God and so to die; after his most grievous complaints, he saith, "When I called upon him, and he hath answered, yet believe I not that he hath heard my voice." As if Job would say, So terrible are my torments, so vehement is my pain and anguish, that, although, verily God hath heard my petitions, yet I feel not that he will grant me my request. Here is a strong battle, when they perfectly understand that there is no remedy, but in God only, and yet they look for no support from God's hand, as might appear to man's judgment: for he that saith that God punishes him, and therefore cannot be merciful, and he who doubteth whether God hears him or not, appears to have cast away all hope of God's deliverance.

These things I put you in mind of, beloved mother, that, although your pains sometimes are so horrible, that you find no release nor comfort, either in spirit or body, yet if the heart can only sob unto God, despair not, you shall obtain your heart's desire; and destitute you are not if you shall obtain your heart's desire. For at such time as the flesh, natural reason, the law of God, the present torment, and the devil, at once do cry, God is angry, and therefore is there neither help nor remedy to be hoped for at his hands. At such time, I say, to sob unto God is the demonstration of the secret seed of God, which is hid in God's elect children; and that sob alone is a more acceptable sacrifice unto our God, than, without this cross, to give our bodies to be burnt, even for the truth's sake. For if God be present by assistance of his Holy Spirit, so that no doubt is in our conscience, but that assuredly we stand in God's favour, what can bodily trouble hurt the soul or mind, seeing the bitter frosty wind cannot hurt the body itself, which is most warmly covered and clad from violence of the cold.

But when the Spirit of God appears to be absent, yea, when God himself appears to be our enemy, then to say, or to think, with Job in his trouble, "Although he should destroy or slay me, yet will I trust in him." O, what is the strength and vehemence of that faith, which so looks for mercy, when the whole man feels nothing but dolours on every side? Assuredly that hope shall never be confounded, for so is it promised by Him who cannot repent

of his mercy and goodness. Rejoice, mother, and fight to the end, for sure I am that you are not utterly destitute of that Spirit who taught David and Job. What obedience I have heard you give unto God, in your most strong torment, it needs not for me to write; only I desire, which is a portion of my daily prayer, God our Father, for Christ Jesus his Son's sake, that in all your trouble you may continue as I have left you, and that, with David, you may sob; although the mouth may not speak, yet let the heart groan, and say, Have mercy upon me, O Lord, and heal me. And then I nothing doubt, your grievous torments shall not molest you for ever, but shortly shall have an end, to your everlasting consolation and comfort.

You think, peradventure, that you will gladly call and pray for mercy, but the knowledge of your sins hinders you. Consider, dearly beloved, that all physic or medicine serves only for the patient; so does mercy serve only for the sinner, yea, for the wretched and most miserable sinner. Did not David understand himself to be a sinner, an adulterer, and a shedder of innocent blood? Yea, knew he not also that he was punished for his sins? Yes, verily he did, and therefore he called for mercy; which he that knows not the heaviness and multitude of sins can in no wise do, but most commonly despises mercy when it is offered; or, at least, the man or woman that feels not the burden of sin, lightly regards mercy, because he feels not how necessary it is to him; as betwixt Christ and the proud pharisees, in many places of the New Testament it is to be seen. And, therefore, dear mother, if your adversary trouble you with your sins, either past or present, objecting that mercy appertains not unto you, by reason of your sins, answer unto him as you are taught by our Saviour Christ Jesus, that the whole needeth not a physician, neither yet the just, mercy or pardon. But that our Christ is come to give sight to the blind, and to call sinners to repentance, of whom you acknowledge yourself to be the greatest, and yet that you doubt not to obtain mercy, because it was never denied to any that asked the same in faith, and thus no doubt you shall obtain victory by Christ Jesus, to whom be praise for ever. Amen.

In the rest of David's prayer now will we be shorter, that we may come to the ground of the same. After desiring of mercy, David desires a corporeal benefit, saying,

"*Heal me, Lord.*" Hereof is to be noted that bodily health, being the gift of God, may be asked of him without sin, although we understand ourselves to be punished for our offences; neither in so praying, are we contrary to God's will. For his providence has planted in the nature of man a desire of health, and a desire that it may be preserved; and, therefore, he is not offended that we ask health of body when we want it, neither yet, that we seek preservation of our health by such ordinary means as His Majesty hath appointed. Provided always, that God himself be first sought, and that we desire neither life nor health to the hinderance of God's glory, nor to the hurt or destruction of others our brethren; but, rather, that by this, God's glory may be promoted, also that others, our brethren, by our strength, health, and life may be comforted and defended. These things now rightly observed, it is no sin earnestly to ask of God health of body, although we know our sickness to be the very hand of God, punishing or correcting our former evil life.

This I write, because some men are so severe, that they would not that we ask bodily health of God, because the sickness is sent to us by him. But such men do not rightly understand, neither yet consider, that sickness is a trouble to the body, and that God commands us to call for his help in all our troubles. Surely, our submission and prayers in such extremity is the greatest glory that we can give unto our God. For so doing, we think that his mercy abounds above his judgment, and so we are bold to pray for the withdrawing of his scourge; which petition, no doubt, he must grant, for so he promises by his prophet Jeremiah, saying, "If I have spoken against any nation or city, saying, that I will destroy it, and if it turn from iniquity, and repent, it shall repent me also of the plagues that I have spoken against it." God promises to show mercy to a whole city or nation if it repent; and will he not do the same to a particular person, if, in his sickness, he calls for grace? He has showed to us that he will, by divers examples, and especially by the leprosy of Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, which she received of the Lord's hand, punishing her high and haughty mind; and upon her submission, and at the prayer of Moses, she shortly was restored again to health.

But to proceed. David, moreover, prayeth, "*Turn again, O Lord.*" It appeared unto David, being in the

extremity of his pain, that God was altogether departed from him, for so this flesh, yea, the whole man, alway judges when trouble works for any continuance of time. David had sustained trouble many days; he had prayed, and yet was not delivered; and, therefore, he judges that God, being offended for his sins, had left him. And yet it is plain that God was with him, working repentance in his heart by his Holy Spirit; expressing forth those sobs and groans, as also the desire he had to be restored to that comfort and consolation which sometimes he had felt, by the intercourse which he had with God. All these motions, I say, were the operations of God's Holy Spirit; and yet David could perceive no comfort nor presence of God in his trouble, but lamentably complains, as you have before heard. Hereof it is plain, that the very elect sometimes are without all feeling of consolation, and that they think themselves altogether destitute, as may be seen in David.

But it is chiefly to be noted, that David in his anguish remembers that God sometimes had been familiar* with him, for he saith, "Turn again, O Lord," signifying hereby, that before he had felt the sweetness of God's presence; but now he was left to himself without feeling of comfort or consolation. For thus David appears to complain, Hast thou not been familiar with me, O Lord, thy unprofitable servant? Didst thou not call me from keeping sheep, to be anointed king over thy people Israel? Didst not thou so encourage my mind, that I feared not the fresh strength of the cruel lion, neither yet the devouring teeth of the hungry bear; from whose jaws I delivered my sheep? Didst not thou once inflame my heart with the zeal of thy holy name, that when all Israel were so afraid that none durst encounter with that monster Goliath, yet the Holy Spirit made me so bold and so valiant, that, without harness or weapons, except my sling, staff, and stones, I durst enterprise battle singly against him? Was it not thy own strength that gave me victory, not only at that time, but also over all other enemies that have sought my life since? Hast thou not made me so glad by the multitude of thy mercies and thy most gracious favour, which thou from time to time, hast most abundantly poured upon me, so that both soul and body have rejoiced through the gladness of thy countenance? Hast

* Present.

thou not been so effectually present with me in troubles and dangers, that my very enemies have known and confessed that thy power was always with me, and that thou didst take my defence upon thy own self? And wilt thou now so leave the habitation that thou hast chosen? Shall it be left desolate for ever, and can thy mercies have an end, and shall thy fatherly pity never appear more unto me? Wilt thou leave me for ever, thus to be tormented, whom thy goodness has aforetime so abundantly comforted? O Lord, I am sure thy free mercies will not so entreat me, and therefore turn again, O Lord, my God; and make me glad with thy countenance, whom of long time thou hast left void of consolation and joy.

Mark and consider, dearly beloved, in what state David was, when he had no other comfort, except only the remembrance of God's former benefits showed unto him. And, therefore, marvel you not, nor yet despair, yea, although you find yourself in the same case that David was. Sure I am, that your own heart must confess that you have received even like benefits of the hands of God as David did. He hath called you from a more vile office than from the keeping of sheep, to as great a dignity (touching the everlasting inheritance) as he did David. For, from the service of the devil and sin, he hath anointed us priests and kings by the blood of his only Son Jesus. He hath given you courage and boldness to fight against more cruel, more subtle, more dangerous enemies; and against enemies that are more near unto you than were either the lion, the bear, or Goliath, to David. Against the devil, I mean, and his assaults; against your own flesh, and most inward affections; against the multitude of them that were (and yet remain) enemies to Christ's religion; yea, and against some of your most natural friends, who appear to profess Christ with you, and in that respect the battle is more vehement. What boldness I have seen with you in all such conflicts, it needs not for me to rehearse. I write this to the praise of God, I have wondered at that bold constancy which I have found in you at such time as my own heart was faint. Sure I am, that flesh and blood could never have persuaded you to have contemned and set at nought those things which the world most esteems. You have tasted and felt of God's goodness in such measure, that you are able not only to reason and speak, but also, by the Spirit of God working in you, to

give comfort and consolation to such as were in trouble. And therefore, dear mother, think not that God will leave his own mansion for ever. No, it is impossible that the devil shall occupy God's inheritance, or yet that God shall so leave and forsake his holy temple that he will not sanctify the same. Again, God sometimes suspends his own presence from his elect, as here by David may be seen, and very often suffers his elect to taste of bitterness and grief for such causes as are before expressed. But to suffer them to be wrested out of his hands, that he neither will nor may permit; for if so, he were a mutable God, and would give his glory to another, if he permitted himself to be overcome of his adversaries, which is as impossible, as it is that God shall cease to be God.

Now last, David prayeth, "*Deliver my soul and save me.*" In this prayer David desired to be delivered from the bodily death at that time, and his soul to be saved from the present plagues and grievous torments that he sustained. In which it might appear to some that he was more addicted to this present life, and that he loved more the quietness of the flesh than it became a spiritual man to do. But, as before is said, God hath naturally engrafted and planted in man this love of life, tranquillity, and rest; and the most spiritual man oftentimes desires them, because they are seals and witnesses of the league* and fellowship that is between God and his elect. And although trouble most commonly follows the friends of God, yet he is not offended that earnestly we ask our quietness; neither is that desire any declaration of carnality or of inordinate love that we have to the world, considering that the final cause wherefore we desire to live, is not for enjoying of worldly pleasure, for many times in the midst of those, we grant and confess that it is better to be absent from the body. But the chief cause why God's elect do desire life, or to have rest on earth, is for the maintenance of God's glory, and that others may see that God takes care over his elect.

But now to the grounds and foundation of David's prayers, and whereupon his prayers do stand.

The first is taken from the vehement trouble which he sustained, and from the long continuance of the same.

The second is taken from the goodness of God.

* Covenant.

The third from God's glory, and from the insolent rage of his enemies.

Here is to be observed and noted, that neither trouble, nor the long continuance of the same, nor yet the proud and haughty minds of wicked men, is the chief moving cause why God hears our prayers, and declares himself merciful unto us; and therefore they may not be the sure and sound foundations of our prayers; but only God's infinite goodness, is the free fountain of all mercy and grace, which springs and comes unto us by Christ Jesus his Son. But they are causes, by operation of the Holy Spirit helping our weakness to believe, and to trust that God, who is the Father of mercies, will not be angry for ever at the sorely afflicted, nor yet that he will punish without mercy such as call for his help and comfort. So also that God, who has alway declared himself enemy to pride, will not suffer proud and obstinate contemners of his poor saints, long to blaspheme his lenity and gentleness, but that he will pour forth his plagues upon them, according to his threatenings. And so our troubles, and the tyranny of our enemies in that behalf, are foundations whereupon our prayers may stand, as here appears.

David declares his dolour, and its continuance, in these words, "*I am consumed away with sickness, all my bones are vexed, and my soul is in horrible fear! But, Lord, how long wilt thou thus entreat me? I am wearied for sobbing; I water my bed with my tears.*" Let us think that David thus speaks, O Lord, mayest thou, who ever hast taken care for me from my mother's womb, now forget me, the workmanship of thy own hands? Mayest thou, who hast declared thyself so merciful unto me in all my tribulations, now in the end take thy mercies wholly from me; and leave me to be consumed by this grievous torment, wherein not only is my tender flesh, but also my very bones, the strongest part of the body, so vexed, that neither is there beauty nor strength left unto me; if these anguishes occupied the body only, yet were the pain almost insufferable? But, O Lord, how horribly is my soul tormented, that, although it be immortal, yet it so quakes and trembles, as though very death could devour it. And thus do I sustain most grievous torments, both in body and soul, of so long continuance, that it appears unto me thou hast forgotten to be merciful. O Lord, how long wilt thou treat me in this manner? Hast thou

forgotten thy loving mercies? or hast thou forgotten fatherly pity? I have no longer strength to cry; yea, and for sobs and groans I am so weary that my breath faileth me; the tears of my eyes, wherewith nightly I have wet my bed, have borne witness of my unfeigned dolour; but now my eyes are waxen dim, and my whole strength dried up.

In all these lamentable complaints, David speaks unto God as he would speak unto a man that was ignorant what another man suffered; whereof it may be understood how the most prudent and the most spiritual man judges of God in the time of trouble. Assuredly he thought that God took no care for him, and therefore did he, as it were, accuse God of unmindfulness, and that he looked not upon him with the eyes of his accustomed mercy, as clearly by these words may be espied; and yet are David's troubles the first ground and cause why he makes his prayers and claims to be heard. Not that troubles, as before is noted, are sufficient by themselves for God's deliverance, but, in recounting his dolour, David has a secret access to God's mercy, which he challenges and claims of duty to appertain to all his, who, in the time of trouble, call for his support, help, and aid. And it is the same ground that Job takes, when he says, "Is it profitable unto thee that thou violently oppress me? Wilt thou despise the work of thy own hands? Thou hast formed and made me altogether, and wilt thou now devour me? Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast fashioned me as a mould, and that thou shalt bring me to dust. Thou hast covered me with skin and flesh; with sinews and bones hast thou joined me; with life and comeliness hast thou beautified me; and thy prudence hath kept my spirit." Here may be espied upon what ground these two stood in their most grievous pains. Their trouble moved them to complain, and to appeal to the great mercy of God, which, as they alleged, even so it is most sure, he may deny to none that ask it. For as the trouble of his creatures is no advantage unto God, so to deny mercy when it is asked, were to deny himself.

And herein, dearly beloved, I heartily wish you to rejoice, for I can be witness how constantly you have called for grace in your anguishes; and your own conscience must testify, that oftentimes you have found relief and comfort in such measure, that you have been bold to triumph against your adversaries, in Christ Jesus your

Saviour. Be not afraid, although at present you feel not your accustomed consolation; that shall hurt you no more than the troubles of David and Job did hurt them, who, in the time that they spake these former words, found no more consolation than you do now in the greatest extremity of your trouble. Neither yet did they hastily obtain comfort, for David saith, "O Lord, how long wilt thou so cruelly punish me?" And yèt we know most assuredly that they were heard, and that they obtained their heart's desire; as, no doubt, every one shall, that in time of trouble, be it spiritual or corporeal, appeals only to God's mercy.

The second ground and foundation whereupon the prayers of David do stand, is, the infinite goodness of God. For thus he saith, "Save me, O Lord, for thy goodness." David before had asked mercy, and declared his complaints; but now searches and reasons with himself secretly in his conscience after this manner, Why should God show mercy unto him that so heinously had offended, and that justly was tormented by God's hand for his transgression and sin? He finds no other ground that is always sure and permanent except God's infinite goodness, which he perceives to be the only stay; which neither tempest of winds, nor floods of water, are able to overthrow or undermine.

And Oh! how piercing are the eyes of faith, that, in so deep a dungeon of desperation, can yet espy, in the very midst of this troublesome darkness, plentiful goodness to remain in our God; yea, and such goodness as is sufficient and able to overcome, devour, and swallow up, all the iniquities of his elect, so that none of them are able to withstand or hinder God's infinite goodness to show his mercy to his troubled children. Hereby are we taught, beloved, in the extremity of our trouble, to run to God's goodness only; there to seek comfort by Christ Jesus, and nowhere else. I fear not the blasphemous voices of such, nor their raging against God, and against his only eternal verity, who are not ashamed to affirm that this kind of doctrine makes men negligent to do good works; against whom no otherwise will I contend than the apostle doth, saying, "Their damnation is just." For my purpose and mind is to edify those whom God hath called from darkness to light, whose eyes it hath pleased his mercy so to

open, that evidently they feel the flesh to rebel against the spirit, even in the hour of their greatest perfection; in such a manner that all power, all justice, and all virtue proceeding from us is so contaminated and defiled, that the very good works which we do must be cleansed by another, and that, therefore, none of them can be an infallible ground of our prayer, nor yet a sufficient cause why we should be heard. But the goodness of God, as it is infinite, so can it not be defiled by our iniquity; but it passes throughout the same, and will show itself to our consolation, even as the beams of the bright sun pass through the mists and dark clouds, and bring down his natural heat, to comfort and quicken such herbs and creatures as, through cold, were almost fallen into most deadly decay. Thus the goodness of God only remains, in all storms, the sure foundation to the afflicted, against which the devil is never able to prevail. The knowledge of this is so necessary to the afflicted conscience, that without the same it is very hard to withstand the assaults of the adversary; for as he is a most subtle spirit, and vigilant to trouble the children of God, so it is easy to him to deface and undermine all the grounds and causes that are within man; and especially, when we are in trouble; —yea, he can persuade us that we want those things which, most assuredly, we have received by God's free gift and grace.

As, for example; if we desire to be delivered from trouble and anguish of conscience with David and Job, the devil suddenly can object, What appertaineth their examples unto thee? They had many notable and singular virtues which thou lackest. If we desire remission of sins with Magdalene, with Peter, or with any other offenders, he hath these darts ready to shoot; They had faith, but thou hast none; they had true repentance, thou art but a hypocrite; they hated sin and continued in good works, but thou rejoicest in sin, and dost no good at all. By these means can he who is the accuser of us and of our brethren, ever find out some crafty accusation to trouble the weak conscience of the afflicted, as long as ever it resteth upon any thing that is within itself. And it does so till, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, we are enrapt and taken up to the contemplation of our God, so that our minds are fixed only upon God's infinite goodness, claiming by the same to receive mercy; as Job does in his former words,

the sense and meaning whereof is this, O Lord, thou madest me when yet I was not; thou gavest me soul and body when I neither knew nor understood what thy power was; thou didst feed me and nursed me when I could do nothing but weep and mourn; and thy Majesty's providence unto this day hath preserved my life; and yet neither I nor my works could profit thee; for thou, whose habitation is in heaven, needest not the help of man. And as for my works, such as the fountain is, such must the waters be; my heart is corrupted, how then can any thing that is clean proceed from the same? And so, whatever I have received, that either was, is, or hereafter shall be, within my corrupt nature, all proceeds from thy infinite goodness, which began to show thy mercy before I knew thee. Canst thou, O Lord, leave me thus, then, in my extremity? I grant and confess that I have offended; but is there any creature clean and perfect in such perfection that without mercy he may abide the trial of thy justice? Or is there any iniquity now in me, which thy wisdom did not know before? And thus I appeal to thy only mercy, which springs from thy infinite goodness.

O beloved, when the afflicted soul can thus forsake and refuse whatever is in man, and can stay itself, how little soever it be, upon God's infinite goodness, then are all the fiery darts of the devil quenched, and he is repulsed as a confounded spirit. It shall hurt nothing, although the stormy tempest cease not suddenly; it is sufficient, that this anchor be cast out which assuredly shall preserve your ship, that she violently run not upon the foreland of desperation. This I write, beloved in the Lord, knowing what have been your complaints heretofore; in that you found your faith faint, that you could not repent of your former evil life, that you found no disposition nor readiness to good works, but were rather carried away of sin and wickedness. If all this had been true, yet had you been in no worse case than the apostle Paul was, when he cried, "Oh wretched and unhappy man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin?"

But I assuredly know that the chief part of your trouble proceeds from the malice and envy of the devil, who would persuade your heart, that you delighted in those things which, to you, were most displeasing. For how oft have you complained of the weakness of your faith! how oft have you lamented the imperfection of your flesh! The

tears of your eyes have witnessed before God that you delight not in such things as your adversary falsely layeth to your charge. For who uses continually to mourn for those things that are pleasing to his heart, if they be present with him at all times? Or who will desire pleasing things to be removed from him? You have mourned for your weakness, and have desired your imperfections to be removed, and have detested all sorts of idolatry; how then can you think that you take any pleasure in the same? Despair not, although all remembrance of God's goodness or worthiness be removed from the mind. You have David, Job, Daniel, and all the other saints of God in equal sort with you. Of David and Job you have heard. And Isaiah, making his heavy complaint for the plagues of the people of Israel, openly confesses that all have sinned, that their righteousness was nothing but filthiness, that none sought God, that none called upon his name. And Daniel, in his prayer, likewise confesses that all had wrought wickedly, that all had declined from God, yea, that none had submitted themselves to God, nor yet had made supplication unto him, although he had punished their former disobedience; and therefore he saith that they did not allege their own justice* in their prayers. Consider that no mention is made of any righteousness that was in themselves, neither yet do they glory of any works or virtues that they had wrought before; for they understood that God was the author of all goodness, and therefore to him only appertained the praise. But as for their sins, they understood them to be the infirmities of their own flesh, and therefore they boldly called for mercy, and that only by God's infinite goodness, which is no less free unto you than unto them, according to the riches of his liberal graces, which he plentifully pours forth upon all them that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

The third and last ground of David's prayer, was the glory and praise of God's name to be showed and uttered in his life, as in these words he declares, "*For there is no remembrance of thee in death. Who laudeth thee in the pit?*" As if David would say, O Lord, how shall I pray and declare thy goodness when I am dead, and gone down into the grave? It is not thy ordinary course to have thy

* Righteousness.

miracles and wondrous works preached unto men by those that are buried and gone down into the pit; those that are dead make no mention of thee in the earth: and, therefore, O Lord, spare thy servant, that yet, for a time, I may show and witness thy wondrous works unto mankind. These most godly affections in David engendered in him a vehement horror and fear of death, besides that which is natural and common to all men, because he perfectly understood that, by death, he should be prevented from advancing the glory of God any further. Of the same he complains most vehemently in the eighty-eighth psalm, where, apparently, he takes from them that are dead, sense, remembrance, feeling, and understanding; alleging that God worketh no miracles by the dead; that the goodness of God cannot be preached in the grave, nor his faithfulness in perdition; and that his marvellous works are not known in darkness. By which speeches we may not understand that David takes all sense and feeling from the dead, nor that they which are dead in Christ are in such estate that they have not consolation and life by God; no, Christ himself witnesses the contrary. But David so vehemently depresses their estate and condition, because that, after death, they are deprived from all ordinary ministration in the church of God. None of those that are departed are appointed to be preachers of God's glory unto mankind. After death they cease any more to advance God's holy name here amongst the living on earth; and so shall even they, in that behalf, be unprofitable to the congregation, as touching any thing that they can do either in body or soul after death. And therefore David most earnestly desires to live in Israel for the further manifestation of God's glory.

Here also there is to be observed by us a short, but yet a most necessary note, which is this: What are the things that we ought principally to seek in this transitory life? Not those for which the blind world contends and strives; but God and his loving kindness towards mankind, his amiable promises, and true religion, are to be advanced and preached unto others, our brethren, that are ignorant; for if we do not so, we may rather be counted beasts than men, dead stocks than living creatures; yea, rather things that be not at all, than substance having either being or life. Seeing that the heavens declare the glory of God, the earth, with the whole contents thereof, whatever they

are, do give praise to his holy name; the sea, floods, and fountains, with the wonders contained in the same, do not cease to make manifest the wisdom, the power, and the providence of their Creator, what then shall be said of man, that neither seeks nor regards God's glory? Yea, what shall be judged of those that not only hinder God's glory, but also declare themselves enemies to such as would promote it? I must speak my conscience with a sorrowful heart; they are not only dead, but they are also of the nature of him by whose malice and envy death entered into the world, that is, the devil. But them I omit at this present, because their accusation does not much appertain to this our matter, whereof now I must make an end, somewhat contrary to my mind; for so I am compelled to do by some present troubles as well of body as of spirit.

The fourth part of this psalm I omit to more opportunity; for it does not much appertain to the spiritual cross, but it is, as it were, a prophecy, spoken against all such as rejoice at the troubles of God's elect, who assuredly shall be confounded, and suddenly brought to shame, when the Lord shall hear the voices of his sorely afflicted. Now, dearly beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ, seeing that the spiritual cross is proper for the children of God;—seeing that it is given to us as a most effectual medicine, as well to remove diseases as to plant in our souls most notable virtues, such as humility, mercy, contempt of ourselves, and continual remembrance of our own weakness and imperfections; and seeing that you have had most evident signs that this medicine has wrought in you a part of all that I have spoken of, receive it thankfully of your Father's hand, what trouble soever it bring with it. And although the flesh grudge, yet let the spirit rejoice, steadfastly looking for deliverance: and assuredly you shall obtain according to the good will and promises of Him who cannot deceive. To whom be glory for ever and ever, before his congregation. Amen.

Now seeing it is uncertain, beloved mother, if ever we shall meet in this bodily life; which words I will that you take not in any displeasure, for if God continue you in life, and me in bodily health, I shall attempt and essay to speak to you, face to face, within less time than is

passed since the one of us last saw the other. And be you assured, beloved mother, that neither shall it be the fear of death, nor the rage of the devil that shall hinder me; and therefore, I beseech you, take not my words in that part, as though I were not minded to visit you again; no, I assure you, that only God's hand shall withhold me. But because our life vanishes as the smoke before the blast of wind, my conscience moves me to write unto you, as though I should take from you my last good night on earth. The sum whereof is this, to exhort and admonish you, even as you will have part with Christ Jesus, to continue in the doctrine to the end, which before the world you have professed.

For, before God, before Christ Jesus his only Son, and before his holy angels, neither am I ashamed to confess, nor doubt I to affirm, that the doctrine which you and others have heard, not only of my mouth, but also faithfully taught by the mouths of many others, (of whom some are exiled, some cruelly cast into prison, and the rest commanded to silence,) is the only word of life, and that all doctrine repugning to the same is diabolical and erroneous, which assuredly shall bring death and perpetual condemnation, to all those who thereto shall condescend and agree. And, therefore, mother, be not moved with any wind, but stick to Christ Jesus in the day of this his battle. And also I admonish you to avoid that abomination, which often you have heard affirmed by me to be damnable idolatry. And I take God to record in my conscience, that neither then nor now I spake, neither do I speak, for pleasure, or hatred of any living creature in earth, whatsoever it be; but as my consience was certified by the infallible and plain word of God, from which, I praise my most merciful Father, I am not this day one jot removed, neither repent I of that, my blessed and most happy society with the truth of Christ's gospel, unto which it hath pleased God to call me, the most wretched of others. Neither forthink I* that God hath made me an open and manifest enemy to papistry, to superstition, and to all that filthy idolatry, which is newly erected in God's hot displeasure. Neither yet would I recant, as they term it, one sentence of my former doctrine, for all the glory, riches, and rest that is in earth.

And, in conclusion, I would not bow my knee before

* Nor am I sorry.

that most abominable idol,* for all the torments that earthly tyrants can devise, God so assisting me, as his Holy Spirit moves me to write unfeignedly. And although I have, in the beginning of this battle, appeared to play the fainthearted and feeble soldier, the cause of which I remit to God, yet my prayer is that I may be restored to battle again. And blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am not so bare without comfort, but my hope is to obtain such mercy, that if a short end be not made of all my miseries by final death, (which to me were no small advantage,) that yet, by him who never despiseth the sobs of the sorely afflicted, I shall be so encouraged to fight, that England and Scotland shall both know that I am ready to suffer more than either poverty or exile, for the profession of that doctrine, and that heavenly doctrine, whereof it has pleased his merciful providence to make me, amongst others, a simple soldier and witness bearer unto men. And therefore, mother, let no fear enter into your heart, as though I, escaping the furious rage of those ravening wolves, which for our unthankfulness are lately loosed from their bands, do repent anything of my former firmness. No, mother, for a few sermons by me to be made in England, my heart at this hour could be content to suffer more than nature were able to sustain ; as by the grace of the most mighty and most merciful God, who only is the God of comfort and consolation through Christ Jesus, one day shall be known.

In the mean season, yet once again, and as it were my final good night, and last testament in this earth, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, I exhort and admonish you constantly to continue with the verity which yet shall triumph and obtain victory, in despite of Satan and his malice. And avoid idolatry, the maintainers and obeyers whereof shall not escape the sudden vengeance of God, which shall be poured forth upon them, according to the ripeness of their iniquities ; and when they shall cry quietness and peace, which never remains for any continuance with the ungodly, then shall their sudden destruction come upon them without provision.

The God of peace and consolation, who, of his power infinite and invincible, hath called from death the only true and great bishop of our souls, and in him hath placed our flesh above principalities and powers of whatsoever

* The romish mass.

pre-eminence they be, in heaven or in earth, assist you with his Holy Spirit, in such constancy and strength, that Satan and his assaults be confounded, now and ever, in you and in the congregation, by Christ Jesus our Lord. To whom, with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, be all praise eternally. Amen.

Upon the very point of my journey, the last of February, 1553.*

Yours with sorrowful heart,

JOHN KNOX.

WATCH AND PRAY.

* 1554 according to the present style, at that time the year began upon the 1st of April.

A

TREATISE ON PRAYER,

BY

JOHN KNOX;

OR,

A confession, and declaration of prayers added thereto, by John Knox, minister of Christ's most sacred gospel, upon the death of that virtuous and most famous king, Edward the sixth, king of England, France, and Ireland.

In which confession, the said John Knox doth accuse no less his own offences than the offences of others, to be the cause of the taking away of that most godly prince, now reigning with Christ, while we abide plagues for our unthankfulness.

Printed in 1554.

On the accession of queen Mary to the throne of England, in July 1553, Knox, in his sermons, warned the inhabitants of London of the dangers which threatened their religion; he then withdrew to the north, to avoid the consequences which he apprehended might ensue.

Mary, however, for a time continued to promise that she would not interfere with the religious profession of her subjects; and the protestant ministers, in general, availed themselves of this brief interval by continuing their labours. Knox was among the number, and in August he re-commenced preaching in Buckinghamshire and Kent. He was attended by large congregations, and preached during the harvest months, until the end of October. Dr. M'Crie says, "It seems to have been at this time that he composed the Confession and Prayer, which he commonly used in the congregations to which he preached, and in which he prayed for queen Mary by name, and for the suppression of such as meditated rebellion." It is an undoubted fact, that Mary was indebted to the protestants for her throne. This treatise was not printed till July 1554.

A

TREATISE ON PRAYER.

A declaration what true prayer is, how we should pray, and for what we should pray; set forth by John Knox, preacher of God's holy word.

Unto the small and dispersed flock of Jesus Christ. How necessary is the right invocation of God's name, otherwise called perfect prayer, it becomes no christian to misknow;* seeing it is the very branch which springs forth of true faith; whereof if any man be destitute, notwithstanding he is endued with whatsoever other virtues, yet, in the presence of God, is he considered as no christian at all. Therefore it is a manifest sign, that such as are always negligent in prayer do understand nothing of perfect faith; for if the fire be without heat, or the burning lamp without light, then true faith may be without fervent prayer. But because, in times past, there was, and yet, alas, there still is, no small number who reckon that to be prayer, which, in the sight of God, was and is nothing less, I intend shortly to touch upon the circumstances thereof.

What prayer is.—Who will pray must know and understand that prayer is an earnest and familiar talking with God, to whom we declare our miseries, whose help we implore and desire in our adversities, and whom we laud and praise for our benefits received: so that prayer contains the exposition of our dolours,† the desire of God's defence, and the praising of his magnificent name, as the psalms of David clearly teach.

What is to be observed in prayer.—The consideration in whose presence we stand, to whom we speak, and what we desire, should excite us to the greatest reverence in doing this; standing in the presence of the

* To be ignorant or mistaken. † Troubles, sorrows.

omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth, and of all that is therein; whom a thousand thousand angels assist and serve, giving obedience to his eternal majesty; and speaking unto him who knoweth the secrets of our hearts, before whom dissimulation and lies are always odious and hateful; and asking those things which may be most to his glory, and to the comfort of our conscience. But we should attend diligently, that such things as may offend his godly presence may be removed to the uttermost of our power. And, first, that worldly cares and fleshly cogitations, such as draw us from contemplation of our God, be expelled from us, that we may freely, without interruption, call upon God. But how difficult and hard this one thing is to perform in prayer, none know better than such as, in their prayers, are not content to remain within the bands of their own vanity, but are, as it were, enrapt, and do intend* to a purity allowed of God; asking not such things as the foolish reason of man desires, but that which may be pleasant and acceptable in God's presence. Our adversary, satan, at all times compassing us about, is never more busy than when we address and bend ourselves to prayer. Oh, how secretly and subtilely he creeps into our breasts, and, calling us back from God, causes us to forget what we have to do; so that frequently when we, with all reverence, should speak to God, we find our hearts talking with the vanities of the world, or with the foolish imaginations of our own conceit.

How the Spirit maketh intercession for us.—So that without the Spirit of God supporting our infirmities, mightily making intercession for us with unceasing groans, which cannot be expressed with tongue, there is no hope that we can desire any thing according to God's will. I mean not that the Holy Ghost doth mourn or pray, but that he stirreth up our minds, giving unto us a desire or boldness to pray, and causes us to mourn when we are extracted or pulled therefrom. Which thing to conceive, no strength of man suffices, neither is able of itself; but hereof it is plain, that such as understand not what they pray, or expound or declare not the desire of their hearts clearly in God's presence, and in time of prayer, as far as they are able, and do not expel vain cogitations from their minds, they profit nothing in prayer.

Why we should pray, and also understand what we

* Strive to attain.

do pray.—But some will object and say, Although we understand not what we pray, yet God understandeth, who knoweth the secrets of our hearts; he knoweth also what we need, although we explain not or declare not our necessities unto him. Such men verily declare themselves never to have understood what perfect prayer meant, nor to what end Jesus Christ commanded us to pray: which is, First, that our hearts may be inflamed with continual fear, honour, and love of God, to whom we run for support and help whensoever danger or necessity requires; that we so learning to mollify our desires in his presence, he may teach us what is to be desired and what not. Also, that we, knowing our petitions to be granted by God alone, to whom only we must render and give laud and praise, and that we ever having his infinite goodness fixed in our minds, may constantly abide to receive that which with fervent prayer we desire. For sometimes God defers or prolongs to grant our petitions, for the exercise and trial of our faith, and not that he sleepeth or is absent from us at any time, but that with more gladness we might receive what, with long expectation, we have abided for. That thereby we, assured of his eternal providence, so far as the infirmity of our corrupt and most weak nature will permit, doubt not but that his merciful hand shall relieve us in most urgent necessity and extreme tribulation. Therefore, such men as teach us that necessarily it is not required that we understand what we pray, because God knoweth what we need, would also teach us that we neither honour God, nor yet refer or give unto him thanks for benefits received; for how shall we honour and praise him, whose goodness and liberality we know not? And how shall we know, unless we receive and sometimes have experience? And how shall we know that we have received, unless we know verily what we have asked?

The second thing to be observed in perfect prayer is, that standing in the presence of God we be found such as reverence his holy name; earnestly repenting our past iniquities, and intending to lead a new life; for otherwise all our prayers are in vain, as it is written, Whoso withdraweth his ear that he may not hear the law of God, his prayer shall be abominable. Likewise Isaiah and Jeremiah say this: "You shall multiply your prayers, and I shall not hear, because your hands are full of blood;" that is, of all cruelty and mischievous works. Also the Spirit of God

appeareth by the mouth of the blind whom Jesus Christ illuminated, by these words, " We know that God heareth not sinners;" that is, such as do glory and continue in iniquity. So that of necessity, true repentance must needs be had, and go before perfect prayer, or sincere invocation of God's name.

And unto these two things must be annexed the third, which is the dedication of ourselves in God's presence, utterly refusing and casting off our own justice* with all cogitations and opinions thereof. And let us not think that we shall be heard for any thing proceeding purely of our own mind, or depend any thing upon our own justice; which, from the presence of his mercy, repelleth or holdeth with the high proud pharisee: and, therefore, we find the most holy men most dejected and humbled in prayer. David saith, " O Lord our Saviour help us, be merciful to our sins for thy own sake, remember not our old iniquities; but haste thee, O Lord, and let thy mercy prevent us." Jeremiah saith, " If our iniquities bear testimony against us, do thou according to thy own name:" and behold Isaiah; " Thou art angry, O Lord, because we have sinned, and are replenished with all wickedness; and our justice is like a defiled cloth. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are clay; thou art the workman, and we the workmanship of thy hands: be not angry, O Lord, remember not our iniquities for ever." And Daniel, greatly commended of God, in his prayer made most humble confession in these words: " We are sinners, and have offended; we have done ungodly, and fallen from thy commandment; therefore, not in our own righteousness make we our prayers before thee, but thy most rich and great mercies bring we forth for us. O Lord, hear! O Lord, be merciful and spare us! O Lord, attend, help, and cease not; my God, even for thy own name's sake do it; for thy city and thy people are called after thy own name." Observe, that in these prayers is no mention of their own justice, their own satisfaction, or their own merits; but most humble confession proceeding from a sorrowful and penitent heart; having nothing whereupon it might depend but the sure mercy of God alone, who had promised to be their God, that is, their help, comfort, defender, and deliverer; as he hath also done to us by Jesus Christ, in time of tribulation. And therefore they despaired

* Righteousness.

not, but after the acknowledging of their sins, called for mercy, and obtained the same. Wherefore it is plain that such men as, in their prayers, have respect to any virtue proceeding of themselves, thinking their prayers are accepted thereby, never prayed aright.

What fasting and alms-deeds are, without prayer.—And although to fervent prayer are joined fasting, watching, and alms-deeds, yet are none of these the cause that God will accept our prayers; but they are spurs which make us not to vary, but make us more able to continue in prayer, which the mercy of God doth accept.

But here may it be observed, that David prayeth, "Keep my life, O Lord, for I am holy: O Lord, save my soul, for I am innocent; and suffer me not to be confounded." Also Hezekiah, "Remember, Lord, I beseech thee, that I have walked righteously before thee, and that I have wrought that which is good in thy sight." These words are not spoken of men out of vain-glory, neither yet trusting in their own works; but herein they testify themselves to be the sons of God, by regeneration; to whom he promises always to be merciful, and at all times to hear their prayers.

The cause of their boldness was Jesus Christ.—And so their words spring from a wonted, constant, and fervent faith, surely believing that as God of his infinite mercy had called them to his knowledge, not suffering them to walk after their own natural wickedness, but had partly taught them to conform themselves to his holy law; and that for the promised Seed's sake he would not leave them destitute of comfort, consolation, and defence in so great and extreme necessity: and so they allege not their justice to glory thereof, or to put trust therein, but to strengthen and confirm them in God's promises.

And this consolation I would wish all christians in their prayers; the testimony of a good conscience to assure them of God's promises. But to obtain what they ask must only depend upon him, all opinion and thought of our own justice being laid aside.

And moreover David, in the words above, compares himself with king Saul, and with the rest of his enemies, who wrongfully persecuted him; desiring of God that they prevail not against him, as though he would say, Unjustly do they persecute me, and, therefore, according to my innocence defend me. For otherwise he confesses himself most

grievously to have offended God, as in the preceding places he clearly testifies.

Hypocrisy is not allowed with God.—Thirdly, in prayer is to be observed, that what we ask of God, that we must earnestly desire, acknowledging ourselves to be indigent and void thereof; and that God alone can grant the petitions of our hearts, when it is his good will and pleasure. For nothing is more odious before God than hypocrisy and dissimulation; that is, when men do ask of God things whereof they have no need, or that they believe to obtain by others than by God alone. As if a man ask of God the remission of his sins, thinking, nevertheless, to obtain the same by his own works, or by other men's merits, he mocks God and deceives himself. And in such cases a great number do offend, principally the mighty and rich of the earth, who, for a common custom, will pray this part of the Lord's prayer, Give us this day our daily bread; that is, a moderate and reasonable sustenance; and yet their own hearts will testify that they need not so to pray, seeing they abound in all worldly solace and felicity. I mean not that rich men should not pray this part of the Lord's prayer, but I would they understood what they ought to pray in it, (whereof I intend to speak afterwards,) and that they ask nothing whereof they feel not themselves marvellously indigent and needy; for unless we call in verity, he will not grant; and except we speak with our whole heart, we shall not find him.

The fourth rule necessary to be followed in prayer is, a sure hope to obtain what we ask; for nothing more offends God, than when we ask doubting whether he will grant our petitions; for in so doing we doubt if God be true, if he be mighty and good. Such, saith St. James, obtain nothing of God. And, therefore, Jesus Christ commands that we firmly believe to obtain whatsoever we ask; for all things are possible to him that believeth. And, therefore, in our prayers desperation always is to be expelled. I mean not that any man in extremity of trouble can be without a present dolour, and without a greater fear of trouble to follow. Trouble and fear are the very spurs to prayer; for when man, compassed about with vehement calamities, and vexed with continual solicitude, having, by help of man, no hope of deliverance, with sorely oppressed and punished heart, fearing also greater

punishment to follow, doth call to God for comfort and support from the deep pit of tribulation, such prayer ascendeth into God's presence, and returneth not in vain.

God delivereth his chosen from their enemies.—As David, in the vehement persecution of Saul, hunted and chased from every hold, fearing that one day or other he should fall into the hands of his persecutors, after he had complained that no place of rest was left to him, vehemently prayed, saying, " O Lord, which art my God, in whom only I trust, save me from them that persecute me, and deliver me from mine enemies. Let not this man (meaning Saul) devour my life, as a lion doth his prey, for of none seek I comfort but of thee alone." In the midst of these anguishes the goodness of God sustained him, so that the present tribulation was tolerable, and the infallible promises of God so assured him of deliverance, that his fear was partly mitigated and gone, as plainly appears to such as diligently mark the process of his prayers. For after long menacing and threatening made to him by his enemies, he concludes with these words: " The dolour which he intended to me shall fall upon his own pate; and the violence wherewith he would have oppressed me shall cast down his own head. But I will magnify the Lord according to his justice, and shall praise the name of the Most High." This is not written for David only, but for all such as shall suffer tribulation, to the end of the world. For I, the writer hereof, (let this be said to the praise and laud of God alone,) in anguish of mind and vehement tribulation and affliction, called to the Lord, when not only the ungodly, but even my faithful brethren, yea, and my own self, that is, all natural understanding, judged my cause to be irremediable.* And yet in my greatest calamity, and when my pains were most cruel, his eternal wisdom would that my hands should write far contrary to the judgment of carnal reason, but which his mercy hath proved true. Blessed be his holy name! And, therefore, I dare be bold in the verity of God's word, to promise, that, notwithstanding the vehemence of trouble, the long continuance thereof, the desperation of all men, the fearfulness, danger, dolour, and anguish of our own hearts, yet if we call constantly to God, beyond the expectation of all men, he shall deliver.

Let no man think himself unworthy to call and pray to

* Knox here alludes to his severe confinement on board the French gallies.

God, because he hath grievously offended his majesty in times past; but let him bring to God a sorrowful and repenting heart, saying, with David, "Heal my soul, O Lord, for I have offended against thee: before I was afflicted, I transgressed, but now let me observe thy commandments." To mitigate or ease the sorrows of our wounded consciences, our most prudent Physician hath provided two plasters to give us encouragement to pray, notwithstanding the knowledge of offences committed;—that is, a precept and a promise. The precept, or commandment to pray, is universal, frequently inculcated and repeated in God's Scriptures. "Ask, and it shall be given to you." "Call upon me in the day of trouble." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." "I command that ye pray ever without ceasing." "Make deprecations incessantly, and give thanks in all things." The commandment is, whoso contemns or despises prayer, sins equally with him that doth steal. For as this commandment, Thou shalt not steal, is a precept negative; so, Thou shalt pray, is a commandment affirmative. And God requires equal obedience of all and to all his commandments. Yet more boldly will I say, He who, when necessity constrains, desires not support and help of God, provokes his wrath no less than such as make false gods or openly deny God.

Whoso prayeth not in tribulation, denieth God.—For like as it is to know no physician or medicine, or in knowing them to refuse to use and receive the same; so not to call upon God in thy tribulation, is as if thou didst not know God, or else utterly denied him.

Not to pray is sin most odious.—Oh! why cease we then to call instantly to his mercy, having his commandment so to do, above all our iniquities. We work manifest contempt and despising of him, when, by negligence, we delay to call for his gracious support. Whoso doth call upon God obeys his will, and finds therein no small consolation, knowing that nothing is more acceptable to his Majesty than humble obedience.

To his commandment he addeth his most undoubted promise in many places. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find." And by the prophet Jeremiah God saith, "Ye shall call upon me, and I shall hear you; ye shall seek, and ye shall find me." And by Isaiah he saith, "The father may forget his natural son, and the mother her own child; and although they do, yet shall I not

forget such as call upon me." And hereto the words of Jesus Christ correspond and agree, saying, " If ye, being wicked, can give good gifts to your children, much more my heavenly Father shall give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him. And that we should not think God to be absent, or not to hear us, observeth Moses, saying, " There is no nation that have their gods so adherent or near unto them as our God, who is present at all our prayers." Also the psalmist, " Near is the Lord to all that call upon him in verity." And Christ saith, " Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The readiness of God to hear sinners.—That we should not think God does not hear us, Isaiah saith, " Before ye cry I shall hear, and while they yet speak I shall answer. And also if at even come sorrow or calamity, before the morning spring, I shall reduce* and bring gladness." And these most comfortable words, doth the Lord speak not to Israel after the flesh only, but to all men sorely oppressed, abiding God's deliverance. " For a moment and a little season have I turned my face from thee, but in everlasting mercy shall I comfort thee."

The hope to obtain our petitions should depend upon the promises of God.—Oh! hard are the hearts whom so manifold, most firm, and sure promises do not mollify; whereupon should depend the hope to obtain our petitions. The indignity or unworthiness of ourselves is not to be regarded; for although, in holiness and purity of life, we are far inferior to the chosen which are departed, yet, in that respect we are equal, in that we have the same commandment to pray, and the same promise to be heard. For our gracious God esteems not the prayer, neither grants the petition for any dignity† of the person that prayeth, but for his promise sake only. And, therefore, saith David, " Thou hast promised unto thy servant, O Lord, that thou wilt build a house for him, wherefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray in thy sight, now even so. O Lord, thou art God, and thy words are true: thou hast spoken these good things unto thy servant begin, therefore, to do according to thy promise; multiply, O Lord, the household of thy servant." Behold, David altogether depended upon God's promise. As also did Jacob, after he had confessed himself unworthy of all the

* Bring back again. † Worthiness.

benefits received, yet dare he boldly ask greater benefits in times subsequent, and that because God had promised.

In the like manner let us be encouraged to ask whatsoever the goodness of God hath freely promised. What we should principally ask, we shall hereafter declare.

Observation in godly prayer.—The first observation which godly prayer requires, is the perfect knowledge of the Advocate, Intercessor, and Mediator.

Of necessity we must have a mediator,—For, seeing no man is of himself worthy to compare or appear in God's presence, by reason that sin continually remaineth in all men, which, by itself, doth offend the majesty of God; raising also debate, strife, and division betwixt his inviolable justice and us: for the which, unless satisfaction be made by another than by ourselves, so little hope remaineth that we can attain any thing from him, that we can have no surety with him at all. To exempt us from this horrible confusion our most merciful Father has given unto us his only beloved Son to be unto us justice, wisdom, sanctification, and holiness. If in him we faithfully believe, we are so clad that we may with boldness appear before the throne of God's mercy; doubting not but whatsoever we ask, by our Mediator, we shall obtain most assuredly that same. Here is most diligently to be observed, that without our Mediator, forspeaker* and peace-maker, we enter not into prayer; for the incallings of such as pray without Jesus Christ are not only vain, but also they are odious and abominable before God. And which thing, in the Levitical priesthood, was most evidently prefigured and declared; for as within the most holy place no man entered but the high priest only, and as all sacrifices offered by any other than by priests only, provoked the wrath of God upon the sacrifice maker; so whoever intends to enter into God's presence, or to make prayers without Jesus Christ, shall find nothing but fearful judgment and horrible damnation.

Wherefore it is plain that Turks and Jews, notwithstanding they do, apparently, most fervently pray unto God, who created heaven and earth, who guideth and ruleth the same, who defendeth the good, and punisheth the evil, yet their prayers are never pleasing unto God; neither honour they his holy Majesty in any thing, because they acknowledge not Jesus Christ, for whoso honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father.

* Advocate.

When we be not heard.—For as the law is a statute that we shall call upon God, and as the promise is made that he shall hear, so are we commanded only to call by Jesus Christ, by whom alone we obtain our petitions; for in him alone are all the promises of God confirmed and complete. Whereof, without all controversy, it is plain, that such as have called, or do call upon God, by any other name than by Jesus Christ alone, nothing regard God's will, but obstinately prevaricate, and do against his commandments. And, therefore, they obtain not their petitions, neither yet have entrance to his mercy, For no man cometh to the Father, saith Jesus Christ, but by me. He is the right way; whoso declineth from him goes wrong. He is our Leader, whom, unless we follow, we shall walk in darkness. He alone is our Captain, without whom neither praise nor victory shall we ever obtain.

Intercession to saints.—Against such as depend upon the intercession of saints no otherwise will I contend; but will shortly touch the properties of a perfect mediator. First, the words of Paul are most sure, "A mediator is not a mediator of one," that is, wheresoever is required a mediator there are also two parties; to wit, one party offending, and the other party who is offended; which parties in themselves can in no wise be reconciled. Secondly, the mediator which takes upon him the reconciling of these two parties must be such a one, as having trust and favour of both parties, yet in some things must differ from both, and must be clear and innocent also of the crime committed against the party offended. Let this be more plain by this subsequent declaration. The eternal God standeth upon the one part, and all natural men descending of Adam upon the other part. The infinite justice of God is so offended with the transgressions of all men, that in no wise can amity be made, except such a one be found as fully may make satisfaction for man's offences. Among the sons of men none was found able, for they all were found criminal in the fault of one: and God's infinite justice must abhor the society and sacrifice of sinners.

Angels may not be mediators.—And unto the angels what prevailed the prevarication of man, who, even if they would have interposed themselves as mediators, yet they had not the infinite justice.* Who then shall here be found the peace-maker? Surely the infinite goodness and mercy of

* Righteousness.

God might not suffer the perpetual loss and repudiation of his creatures: and therefore his eternal wisdom provided such a Mediator, having wherewith to satisfy the justice of God; differing also from the godhead; his only Son, clad in the nature of manhood, who interposed himself a Mediator, not as man only.

Jesus Christ, God and man, is mediator.—For the pure humanity of Christ, of itself, might neither make intercession nor satisfaction for us, but God and man. In that he is God, he might complete the will of the Father; and in that he is man, pure and clean, without spot or sin, he might offer sacrifice for the taking away of our sins, and satisfaction of God's justice. So, unless saints have these two—godhead equal with the Father, and humanity without sin, saints may not usurp the office of mediator. But here will be objected, Who knoweth not Jesus Christ to be the only Mediator of our redemption, but that impedes or hinders not saints and holy men to be mediators, and to make intercession for us—as though Jesus Christ had been but one hour our mediator, and afterwards had resigned the office unto his servants!

Who maketh other mediators than Jesus Christ, taketh honour from him.—Do not such men gentily* entreat Jesus Christ, detracting from him such portion of his honour? Otherwise, the scriptures of God testify him to have been made man, and to have proved our infirmities; to have suffered death willingly; to have overcome the same; and all to this end—that he might be our perpetual High Sovereign Priest, in whose place or dignity none other might enter. As John saith, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the just."

Mark well these words: John saith, We have presently a sufficient Advocate, whom Paul affirms to sit at the right hand of God the Father, and to be the only Mediator between God and man. "For he alone," saith Ambrose, "is our mouth, by whom we speak to God, he is our eyes by whom we see God, and also our right hand, by whom we offer any thing to the Father;" who, unless he make intercession, neither we nor any of the saints may have any society or fellowship with God. What creature may say to God the Father, Let man be received unto thy favour, for the pain of his transgressions I have sustained in my own body? For his

* Respectfully, (spoken ironically.)

cause was I compassed with all infirmities, and so became the most contemned and despised of all men, and yet in my mouth was found no guile, nor deceit, but I was always obedient to thy will, suffering most grievous death for mankind. And, therefore, behold not the sinner, but me, who, by my infinite justice, have perfectly satisfied for his offences. May any other, Jesus Christ excepted, in these words make intercession for sinners? If they may not, then are they neither mediators nor yet intercessors. "For although," saith Augustine, "christians do commend one another unto God in their prayers, yet they make not intercession, neither dare they usurp the office of a mediator; not Paul, although under the Head he was a principal member, because he commendeth himself to the prayers of faithful men." But if any do object, such is not the condition of the saints departed, who now have put off mortality, and bear no longer the fragility of the flesh: which although I grant to be most true, yet are they all compelled to cast their crowns before Him that sitteth on the throne, acknowledging themselves to have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb; and therefore none of them do attempt to be a mediator, seeing they neither have being, nor justice, of themselves.

But in the great light of the gospel, which now is beginning, praise be to the Omnipotent, it is not necessary upon such matters long to remain. Some say, We will use but one mediator, Jesus Christ, to God the Father, but we must have saints, and chiefly the virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, to pray for us unto him.

Against such as would have mediators to Jesus Christ.—Alas! whosoever are so minded, show plainly themselves to know nothing of Jesus Christ rightly. Is He who descended from heaven, and vouchsafed to be conversant with sinners, commanding all sorely vexed and sick to come unto him; who, hanging upon the cross, prayed first for his enemies;—is he become now so untractable that he will not hear us without a person to be a mean? O Lord, open the eyes of such that they may clearly perceive thy infinite kindness, gentleness, and love toward mankind.

Above all these things is to be observed, that what we ask of God ought to be profitable to ourselves and to others, and hurtful or dangerous to no man. Secondly, we must consider whether our petitions extend to spiritual or temporal things. Spiritual things, such as deliverance

from impiety, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and of life everlasting, we should desire absolutely, without any condition, by Jesus Christ, in whom alone all these are promised. And in asking hereof we should not pray thus: O Father, forgive our sins if thou wilt; for he hath expressed his will, saying, As I live, I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he convert and live; which immutable and solemn oath whoso calleth in doubt maketh God a liar, and, so far as in him lies, would spoil him of his Godhead. For he cannot be God except he be eternal and infallible verity. And John saith, "This is the testimony which God hath testified of his Son, that whoso believeth in the Son hath eternal life;" to the verity whereof we should steadfastly cleave, although worldly dolour apprehend us. As David, exiled from his kingdom, and deprived of all his glory, secluded not from God, but steadfastly believed reconciliation, by the promise made, notwithstanding that all creatures in earth had refused, objected, and rebelled against him. Happy is the man whom thou shalt inspire, O Lord.

In asking for temporal things, first let us inquire if we be at peace with God in our conscience by Jesus Christ, firmly believing our sins to be remitted in his blood. Secondly, let us inquire of our own hearts, if we know that temporal riches or substance do not come to man by accident, fortune, or chance, neither yet by the industry and diligence of man's labour; but they are the liberal gift of God only, whereof we ought to laud and praise his goodness, wisdom, and providence alone.

What should be prayed for.—And if we truly acknowledge and confess this, let us boldly ask of Him whatsoever is necessary for us, as sustenance of this body; health thereof; defence from misery; deliverance from trouble; tranquillity and peace to our commonwealth; prosperous success in our vocations, labours, and affairs, whatsoever they are; which God wills we should ask all of him, to certify to us that all things stand in his regimen and disposition. And also by asking and receiving these bodily commodities, we have a taste of his sweetness, and are inflamed with his love, that thereby our faith of reconciliation, and remission of our sins, may be exercised and increase. But in asking such temporal things we must observe, first, that if God deferreth or prolongeth to grant our petitions, even so long that he seems apparently to

reject us, yet let us not cease to call; prescribing him neither the time, nor the manner of deliverance; as it is written, "If he prolong time, abide patiently upon him." And also, "Let not the faithful be too hasty, for God sometimes deferreth and will not quickly grant, for probation of our continuance," as the words of Jesus Christ testify; and also that we may receive with greater gladness that which, with ardent desire, we long have looked for. As Hannah, Sarah, and Elizabeth, after their barrenness and sterility, received children with joy. Secondly, because we know the church at all times to be under the cross in asking temporal commodities, and especially deliverance from trouble, let us offer unto God obedience, if it shall please his goodness we be longer exercised, that we may patiently abide it; as David, desiring to be restored to his kingdom when he was exiled by his own son, offered unto God obedience, saying, "If I have found favour in the presence of the Lord, he shall bring me home again; but if he shall say, Thou pleasest me not longer to bear authority, I am obedient: let him do what seemeth good unto him."

Better it is to obey God than man.—The three children said to Nebuchadnezzar, "We know that our God whom we worship may deliver us, but if it shall not please him so to do, let it be known to thee, O king, that we will not worship thy gods." Here they gave a true confession of their perfect faith, knowing nothing was impossible to the omnipotence of God; affirming also themselves to stand in his mercy; for otherwise the nature of man could not willingly give itself to so horrible a torment; but they offer unto God most humble obedience to be delivered at his good will and pleasure; as we should do in all afflictions, for we know not what to ask or desire as we ought; that is, the frail flesh, oppressed with fear and pain, desires deliverance, ever abhorring and drawing back from giving obedience.

O christian brethren, I write by experience. But the Spirit of God calleth back the mind to obedience, that although it doth desire and abide for deliverance, yet should it not repine against the good will of God, but incessantly ask that it may abide with patience. How hard this battle is, no man knoweth but he who in himself hath suffered trial. It is to be noticed, that God sometimes

doth grant the petition of the spirit, while he yet defers the desire of the flesh.

The petition of the spirit.—As who doubteth but God did mitigate the heaviness of Joseph, although he sent not hasty deliverance in his long imprisonment; and that as he gave him favour in the sight of the jailor, so inwardly also he gave him consolation in spirit. Wherein he utterly repels the desire of the flesh, for the petition of the spirit always is, that we may attain to the true felicity, whereunto we must needs enter by tribulation and the final death, which the nature of man ever abhors, and therefore the flesh, under the cross, and at the sight of death, calls and thirsts for hasty deliverance. But God, who alone knows what is expedient for us, sometimes prolongs the deliverance of his chosen, and sometimes permits them to drink, before the maturity of age, the bitter cup of bodily death, that thereby they may receive medicine and cure from all infirmity. For who doubts that John the Baptist desired to have seen the days of Jesus Christ more, and to have been longer with him in conversation? Or that Stephen would not have laboured more days in preaching Christ's gospel, whom, nevertheless, he suffered speedily to taste of this general sentence? And, although we see therefore no apparent help to ourselves, nor yet to others who are afflicted, let us not cease to call, thinking that our prayers are vain. For, whatsoever come of our bodies, God shall give unspeakable comfort to the spirit, and shall turn all to our good beyond our own expectation.

Impediments come of the weakness of the flesh.—The cause why I am so long and tedious in this matter is, for that I know how hard the battle is betwixt the spirit and the flesh, under the heavy cross of affliction, where no worldly defence, but present death doth appear. I know the grudging and murmuring complaints of the flesh; I know the wrath, anger, and indignation which it conceives against God, calling all his promises in doubt, and being ready every hour utterly to fall from God: against which only faith remains, provoking us to call earnestly, and to pray for assistance of God's Spirit. Wherein if we continue, he shall turn our most desperate calamities to gladness, and to a prosperous end. To thee alone, O Lord, be praise, for with experience I write this and speak it.

Where, for whom, and at what time we ought to pray, is not to be passed over with silence.

Private prayer.—Such prayers as men secretly offer unto God by themselves require no separate place; although Jesus Christ commandeth when we pray to enter into our chamber, and close the door, and so to pray unto our Father secretly. Whereby he would that we should choose for our prayers such places as might offer least occasion to call us back from prayer; and also that we should expel forth from our minds, in time of our prayer, all vain cogitations. For otherwise Jesus Christ himself doth observe no special place of prayer; for we find him sometimes pray in mount Olivet, sometimes in the desert, sometimes in the temple, and in the garden. And Peter desired to pray upon the top of the house. Paul prayed in prison, and was heard of God. Who also commandeth men to pray in all places, lifting up to God pure and clean hands; as we find that the prophets and most holy men did, whensoever danger or necessity required.

Appointed places to pray in may not be neglected.—But public and common prayers should be used in the place appointed for the assembly, from whence whosoever negligently withdraw themselves are in no wise excusable. I mean not, that to be absent from that place is sin because that place is more holy than another; for the whole earth created by God is equally holy. But the promise made, that, "Wheresoever two or three are met together in my name, there shall I be in the midst of them," condemns all such as contemn the congregation gathered in his name. But mark well this word "gathered;" I mean not, to hear piping, singing, or playing; nor to patter upon beads or books whereof they have no understanding; nor to commit idolatry, honouring that for god which is no god indeed. For with such will I neither join myself in common prayer, nor in receiving external sacraments; for in so doing I should affirm their superstition and abominable idolatry, which I, by God's grace, never will do, nor counsel others to do, to the end.

What it is to be gathered in the name of Christ.—The congregation which I mean, should be gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, that is, to laud and magnify God the Father for the infinite benefits they have received by his only Son our Lord. In this congregation the mystical and last Supper of Jesus Christ should be distributed

without superstition, or any more ceremonies than he himself used, and his apostles after him. And in distribution thereof in this congregation, should inquiries be made of the poor among them, and support provided, during the time of their convention, and it should be distributed amongst them. Also, in this congregation should be made common prayer, such as all men hearing might understand; that the hearts of all, subscriving* to the voice of one, might, with unfeigned and fervent mind, say, Amen. Whosoever withdraws himself from such a congregation, (but alas, where shall it be found?) he declares himself to be no member of Christ's body.

For whom, and at what time we should pray.—Now there remains—for whom, and at what time we should pray. Paul commands that we should pray for all men, and at all times. And principally for such of the household of faith as suffer persecution, and for commonwealths tyrannically pressed, incessantly should we call, that God, of his mercy and power, will withstand the violence of such tyrants.

God's sentence may be changed.—And when we see the plagues of God, as hunger, pestilence, or war coming, or appearing at hand; then should we, with lamentable voices and repenting hearts, call unto God, that it would please his infinite mercies to withdraw his hand; which thing if we do unfeignedly, he will, without doubt, revoke his wrath, and in the midst of his anger think upon mercy; as we are taught in the scripture, by his infallible and eternal verity. As in Exodus, God saith, "I shall destroy this nation from the face of the earth," and when Moses addressed himself to pray for them, the Lord proceeded, saying, "Suffer me that I may utterly destroy them." And then Moses falleth down upon his face, and forty days continued in prayer for the safety of the people, for whom at the last he obtained forgiveness. David, in the vehement plague, lamentably called unto God. And the king of Nineveh saith, "Who can tell? God may turn and repent, and cease from his fierce wrath, that we perish not." Which examples and scriptures are not written in vain, but to certify us that God, of his own nature and goodness, will mitigate his plagues, by our prayers offered by Jesus Christ, although he has threatened to punish, or even now doth punish. Which he testifies by his own words, saying,

* Agreeing.

"If I have prophesied against any nation or people, that they shall be destroyed; if they repent of their iniquity, it shall repent me of the evil which I have spoken against them." This I write, lamenting the great coldness of men, who, under such long scourges of God, are nothing kindled to pray by repentance, but carelessly sleep in a wicked life; even as though the continual wars, urgent famine, and daily plagues of pestilence, and other contagious, insolent,* and strange maladies, were not the present signs of God's wrath provoked by our iniquities.

A plague threatened to England.—O England, let thy intestine battle, and domestic murder provoke thee to purity of life, according to the word which openly hath been proclaimed in thee, otherwise thou shalt drink the cup of the Lord's wrath! The multitude shall not escape, but shall drink the dregs, and have the cup broken upon their heads. For judgment beginneth in the house of the Lord, and commonly the least offender is first punished, to excite the more wicked to repentance. But, O Lord, infinite in mercy, if thou shalt punish, make not consummation, but cut away the proud and luxuriant branches which bear no fruit: and preserve the commonwealths of such as give succour and harbour to thy contemned messengers, which long have suffered exile in deserts. And let thy kingdom shortly come, that sin may be ended, death devoured, thy enemies confounded; that we thy people, being delivered by thy majesty, may obtain everlasting joy and felicity, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, to whom be all honour and praise, for ever. Amen.

Hasten, Lord, and tarry not,

JOHN KNOX.†

* Unaccustomed.

† On the title of the printed copy of this tract, we find, "Imprinted at Rome before the castel of St. Aungel, at the signe of Saint Peter, in the moneth of July, in the year of our Lorde, 1554." Notwithstanding this announcement, the tract probably was printed in England, or in some protestant city upon the continent,—and the imprint perhaps was designed to protect the tract from destruction, when it fell into the hands of the ignorant and superficial examiners, who often were employed to search for, and to destroy, the writings of the protestants, during the reign of queen Mary. There are tracts of other reformers printed during the same period, probably on the continent, which bear a similar imprint. The title of Knox's Admonition to the Professors of the Truth in England, bears the imprint of "Kalykow;" by which probably was meant Geneva, at which place several of Knox's publications were printed during his residence there.

The Treatise on Prayer contained in this edition, is printed from a transcript of the Wodrow manuscript in the possession of Dr. M'Crie, by whom it was kindly furnished. It has been collated with the printed edition of 1554, from which the titles of paragraphs, printed in italic, are inserted. The other tracts here printed from the Wodrow manuscript have also been examined by the early printed copies, and the result of this examination fully shows the hasty and incorrect manner in which those editions must have been printed. Dr. M'Crie (Life of Knox, vol. i. note N) has noticed this subject, and has stated several of the most important variations in the treatise on prayer. It should, however, be mentioned, that the manuscript and printed copy of this tract differ more than any of the others; and in some instances the alterations appear to have been made designedly while passing through the press.

To the printed copy of the Treatise on Prayer is added the following confession or prayer, which appears to have been composed, and used by Knox, after the death of Edward VI.

Hereafter followeth a confession by John Knox, minister of Christ's most sacred evangely,* upon the death of that most virtuous and most famous king, Edward the VI., king of England, France, and Ireland, in which confession the said John doth accuse no less his own offences, than the offences of others, to be the cause of the taking away of that most godly prince, now reigning with Christ, while we abide plagues for our unthankfulness.

Omnipotent and everlasting God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by thy eternal providence disposest kingdoms, as seemeth best to thy wisdom: we acknowledge and confess thy judgments to be righteous, in that thou hast taken from us, for our ingratitude, and for abusing of thy most holy word, our native king and earthly comforter.

Justly mayest thou pour forth upon us the uttermost of thy plagues; for that we have not known the days and time of our merciful visitation. We have contemned thy word, and despised thy mercies; we have transgressed thy laws; for deceitfully have we wrought, every man with our neighbours; oppression and violence we have not abhorred: charity hath not appeared among us, as our profession requires. We have little regarded the voices of thy prophets. Thy threatenings we have esteemed vanity and wind. So that in us, of ourselves, remains nothing worthy of thy mercy; for all are found fruitless; even the princes with the prophets, as withered trees apt and meet to be burned in the fire of thy eternal displeasure.

* Gospel.

But, O Lord, behold thy own mercy and goodness, that thou mayest purge and remove the most filthy burden of our most horrible offences. Let thy love overcome the severity of thy judgments, even as it did in giving to the world thy only Son, Jesus, when all mankind was lost, and no obedience was left in Adam nor in his seed. Regenerate our hearts, O Lord, by the strength of the Holy Ghost. Convert thou us, and we shall be converted. Work thou in us unfeigned repentance, and move thou our hearts to obey thy holy laws.

Behold our trouble and apparent destruction, and stay the sword of thy vengeance before it devour us. Place above us, O Lord, for thy great mercy's sake, such a head, with such rulers and magistrates as fear thy name, and will the glory of Christ Jesus to spread. Take not from us the light of thy gospel, and suffer thou no papistry to prevail in this realm. Illuminate the heart of our sovereign Lady Queen Mary,* with fruitful gifts of thy Holy Ghost; and inflame the hearts of her council with thy true fear and love. Repress thou the pride of those that would rebel; and remove from all hearts the contempt of thy word. Let not our enemies rejoice at our destruction, but look thou to the honour of thy own name, O Lord; and let thy gospel be preached with boldness in this realm. If thy justice must punish, then punish our bodies with the rod of thy mercy. But, O Lord, let us never revolt, nor turn back to idolatry again. Mitigate the hearts of those that persecute us; and let us not faint under the cross of our Saviour, but assist us with the Holy Ghost, even to the end.

* This prayer sufficiently shows that the charges sometimes brought against Knox, that he stirred up rebellion against Queen Mary, are unfounded.

A

FAITHFUL ADMONITION,

MADE

BY JOHN KNOX

UNTO THE PROFESSORS OF GOD'S TRUTH

IN ENGLAND;

Whereby thou mayest learn how God will have his church exercised with troubles, and how he defendeth it in the same.

After all this shall not the Lord's wrath cease, but yet shall his hand be stretched out still. Take heed that the Lord root thee not out both head and tail in one day.—Isaiah ix.

In July 1554, Knox left Switzerland, and proceeded to Dieppe in France. He wished to obtain accurate information of the state of his persecuted brethren in England, and to learn whether he could in any manner promote their comfort. The tidings which he received caused him much sorrow; for the sufferings of the English Protestants were daily increasing, and although none as yet had been committed to the flames, there was every reason to expect such proceedings would not be long delayed. Nor was it less painful to him to learn that many who had embraced the truth under his ministry, had been induced to return to popery. In the anguish of his mind he wrote to some of them, setting forth the danger resulting to their souls from their conduct, and impressing upon them the necessity of repentance. Under the influence of these feelings the following admonition to the professors of the truth in England was written: it was printed in the same year.

"Therein he spake of himself, and what he was at first; and made some reflections upon the days of the gospel under king Edward; undertook to show why God took the gospel away; and prayed against these Marian days, that they might be short, and foretold deliverance."—*Strype.*

In this "Admonition," the reader will observe that Knox uses very strong language when speaking of the enemies of the truth. At this we are not surprised, when their characters and the times in which they lived are considered. But while we strive to be equally decided in opposing error, let us avoid personalities, remembering that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." See also some observations in the sketch of the life of Knox.

EPISTLE, &c.

The epistle of a banished man out of Leicestershire, sometime one of the preachers of God's word there.
To the christian reader he wishes health, deliverance, and felicity.

THERE hath been no time, since the first creation of man, which hath not had its manifold miseries and great troubles, by which God chastened and punished all men for their evil life and unthankfulness to him, continually refusing his calling and warning; whereof the righteous and just had their parts, although it was for their advantage and profit, (but to the utter destruction of the wicked and ungodly,) for judgment beginneth at the faithful, which are called the house of God in the scripture; and the punishment whereby God chastens them comes always to them for the best, either to the bringing of patience or the acknowledging of their sins, or for the avoiding of the eternal condemnation. And their manner is, when they perceive the hand of the Lord to be upon them, or upon others, by any manner of trouble, as poverty, sickness, banishment, falling away of faithful friends, increasing of foes, or any other like trouble, immediately they turn to God, are heartily sorry for their sins and unthankfulness, confess themselves guilty, and call earnestly for mercy, which God, for and in Jesus Christ, grants unto them of his great goodness, according to his promise.

So that in the midst of their troubles he has used all ways to comfort them, yea, help and deliver them, as appears by Noah, Abraham, Lot, and the patriarchs; David and Hezekiah, kings; Elijah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, prophets; Susannah, a woman; Peter, Paul, and the rest of the apostles; together with all good persons, in all times and ages, who, in their great troubles, changes of estates

and kingdoms, and destruction of their commonwealths, after they had turned to God from whence those plagues came, found relief, help, comfort, and deliverance in those and the like miserable necessities. This was the only remedy and defence for all good men, thither hath been their chief refuge, there fastened they their hope, and rested not, continually calling upon him until they obtained their requests: or else that which made most for God's glory and their advantage and profit. But contrariwise it is with the perverse and ungodly. For as soon as they are plagued or punished they grudge against God, they hate him, and speak despitefully against him, they ascribe their plagues to evil luck, or to misfortune, they are not moved by them to acknowledge their great sins. Therefore they call not upon him, but they either run into despair or contempt of God; and, therefore, it cannot be thought that their punishments are tokens of the rest and quietness that they may have after this life, but rather to be the beginning of the torments they shall suffer. The examples whereof are likewise set out to us in the holy scriptures, as of Cain, of the Jews as well before the coming of Christ as after his ascension, of wicked Jezebel, of Judas the traitor, and of the thief which was hanged on the left side of our Lord Jesus Christ; with divers and many more, who, in all their troubles, either grudged against God, forsook him, or spake words of despite against him and his prophets, or else fell into despair and contempt of him, any of which are causes of God's further displeasure, and of his sending his greater plagues to hasten their destruction.

Yet the order of the punishments of God, (wherein he declares his merciful nature,) is to be observed of us; which is, he plagueth not commonly all offenders with one manner of plagues, although they are all alike guilty, and at one time; but he striketh some sorer than the others, and beginneth in some one country or city, that the residue might be moved by the example of their punishments, and have time and place to turn to him, who seeketh not the death of a sinner, but his amendment and life, as appears by the story of Ahab after his wife Jezebel had caused Naboth to be put to death. Howbeit, where he threatens to punish the earth with some one plague, as hunger, noisome beasts, the sword, or pestilence; he threatens all four at once upon Jerusalem, which bears the

name of his people, but was disobedient unto him; which may worthily make us fear the more, because we, the people of England, are in the like case, among whom he hath already sent the devouring sword, and a great many slow-bellied, hot, and cruel beasts to destroy. But let us follow the examples of all good men in doing as the Lord our God commands us in these our plagues, which is to turn to him with all our hearts, and to call upon him; it is he only that may, can, and will deliver us. Let the vain trust in man's help be forgotten, leave off to seek sweet water in filthy puddles; what comfort can the sick man have of one that is much sicker than himself, and looketh for nothing but death? let the noblemen of England leave inconstancy, lust, and covetousness, and turn to God aright, and let the people do the same. As there is no man that feeleth not, or feareth not some great plague to come upon him because of his sin, even so let every man repent, turn to God, and call for help betimes, for there hath been no time since the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ wherein there hath been greater plagues than there is now in our time. For besides bloody war, sudden death, great untruth, open perjury, divisions, strange consuming fires, change of great estates and commonwealths, overflowing of great cities and lands by water, hunger and poverty without pity; so as it should appear that God causes the very elements to fight against the world, which some time he caused to defend his people, he hath suffered also that truth of his word, and the true manner of worshipping him according to the scriptures, to be wholly taken away, as it was threatened by Christ to the Jews. (Mat. xxv.) And in token of his further indignation, the hunger and thirst after him and his kingdom, is taken from the most part of the whole realm, that it may be altogether void of that good blessing which Jesus Christ our Lord spake of in the gospel according to St. Matthew, saying, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness," &c.

For thy unthankfulness, O England, he suffereth false teachers to be a burden unto thee, whom if thou dost receive and allow their doctrine, be thou well assured his great wrath cometh shortly after to thy destruction. This is the accustomed order of God when he is minded to destroy. First he sendeth lying spirits in the mouths of their priests or prophets, which delighted in lies, then

suffereth he them to be deceived by the same to their destruction, as he did with Ahab. Be warned yet by this and other such good and true books, gentle reader, so shalt thou be sure to be kept in safe guard in the time of the plague to come, wherein thou shalt also find much comfort. It will move thee to stick fast to the truth of God's word, and to flee from the wicked idolatry of the abominable mass, which doth no more save thee from hurt, than did the painting of devilish Jezebel save her from death when she was headlong hurled out of a window at the commandment of Jehu.

A

FAITHFUL ADMONITION,

MADE

BY JOHN KNOX

UNTO THE PROFESSORS OF GOD'S TRUTH IN ENGLAND.

A. D. 1554.

John Knox wisheth grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the perpetual comfort of the Holy Ghost, to be with you, for ever and ever, dear brethren, the afflicted members of Christ's Church in London.

HAVING no less desire to comfort such as now are in trouble within the realm of England, and especially you, for many causes most dear to me, than the natural father hath to ease the grief and pain of his dearest child; I have considered with myself, what argument or parcel of God's scriptures was most convenient and suitable to be handled for your consolation, in these most dark and dolorous days. As for the same purpose I was turning my book, I chanced to see a note in the margin, written thus in Latin, "Videat Anglia," Let England beware; which note, when I had considered, I found that the matter written in my book in Latin was this, "Seldom it is that God works any notable work to the comfort of his church, but trouble, fear, and labour come upon such as God has used for his servants and workmen; and also tribulation most commonly follows that church where Christ Jesus is most truly preached." This note was made upon a place of scripture written in the fourteenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel; which place declares, That after Christ Jesus had

used the apostles, as ministers and servants, to feed by their hands five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley-loaves and two fishes, he sent them to the sea, commanding them to pass over before him to the other side. Which, when they attempted to obey, and for the same purpose did labour and row forth in the sea, the night approached, the wind was contrary, a vehement and raging storm arose, and was like to overthrow their poor boat and them. When I considered (as dolour and my simplicity would suffer) the circumstances of the text, I began to reckon and ask account of myself, and, as God knows, not without sorrow and sobs, whether at any time I had been so plain by my tongue, as God had opened his holy will and wisdom in that matter unto me, and as mine own pen and note bear witness to my conscience: and shortly it came to my mind, that the same place of scripture I had handled in your presence, when God gave opportunity and time for you to hear God's messenger speak the words of eternal life. Wherefore I thought nothing more expedient, than shortly to call to mind again such things as then I trust were touched upon; albeit peradventure neither so plainly uttered by me, neither so plainly perceived by you, as these most dolorous days declare the same to us.

It will not be necessary to handle the text word by word, but of the whole sum to gather certain notes and observations, which shall not far disagree from the state of these days, shall be sufficient. And,

First, it is to be observed, That after this great miracle which Christ had wrought, he neither would retain with himself the multitude of people whom he had fed, nor yet his disciples; but the one he sent away, every man to return to his place of accustomed residence, and the others he sent to the danger of the seas; not that he was ignorant what should happen unto them, but knowing and foreseeing the tempest, yea, and appointing the same so to trouble them.

It is not to be judged, that the only and true Pastor would remove and send away from him the wandering and weak sheep, neither yet that the only provident Governor and Guide would set out his rude warriors to so great a jeopardy, without sufficient and most just cause.

Why Christ removed and sent away from him the people, the evangelist St. John declares, saying, "When

Jesus knew that they were come to take him, that they might make him a king, he passed secretly (or alone) to the mountain." Whereof it is plain what chiefly moved Christ to send away the people from him; because that by him they sought a carnal and worldly liberty, regarding not his heavenly doctrine of the kingdom of God his Father, which before he had taught and declared unto them plainly; showing them that such as would follow him must suffer persecution for his name's sake, must be hated of all men, must deny themselves, must be sent forth as sheep among wolves. But no part of this doctrine pleased them, or could enter into their hearts; their whole mind was upon their bellies, for sufficing whereof they devised and imagined that they would appoint Christ Jesus to be their worldly king; for he had power to multiply bread at his pleasure. Which vain opinion and imagination being perceived by Christ Jesus, he withdrew himself from their company, to avoid all such suspicion, and to let them understand that no such honours agreed with his vocation, who came to serve, and not to be served: and when this same people sought him again, he sharply rebuked them, because they sought him more to have their bellies fed with corruptible meat, than to have their souls nourished with lively bread that came down from heaven. And thus in the people there was just cause why Christ should withdraw himself from them for a time.

Why the disciples should suffer that great danger, fear, and anguish, St. Mark, in his gospel, plainly shows, saying, "That their hearts were blinded, and therefore did neither remember nor consider the miracle of the loaves." That is, albeit with their hands they had touched that bread, by which so great a multitude was fed; and albeit also they had gathered up twelve baskets full of that which remained of a few loaves, which, before the miracle, a boy was able to have borne; yet did they not rightly consider the infinite power of Christ Jesus by this wonderful miracle; and therefore it was of necessity, that in their own bodies they should suffer trouble for their better instruction.

When I deeply consider, dearly beloved in our Saviour Christ, how abundantly, and how miraculously the poor and small flock of Christ Jesus was fed within the realm of England, under that elect and chosen vessel of God to glory and honour, Edward VI., and now again behold, not

only the dispersion and scattering abroad, but also the appearing destruction* of the same, under these cursed, cruel, and abominable idolaters, methinks I see the same causes which moved God, not only to withdraw his presence from the multitude, but also to send his well-beloved servants to the travels of the seas, wherein they were sorely tossed and turmoiled, and apparently most likely to perish.

What were the affections of the greatest multitude that followed the gospel in the former rest and abundance, is easy to be judged, if the life and conversation of every man should have been thoroughly examined: for who lived, in that rest, as though he had refused† himself? Who lived in that rest, as though he had been crucified with Christ? Who lived in that rest, as though he had certainly looked for trouble to come upon him? Yea, who lived not rather in delicacy and joy, seeking the world and the pleasures thereof, caring for the flesh and carnal appetites, as though death and sin had been quite devoured? And what was this else, than to make of Christ an earthly king? The word that we professed, daily cried in our ears, That our kingdom, our joy, our rest, and felicity, neither was, is, nor should be upon the earth, neither in any transitory thing thereof, but in heaven, "into which we must enter by many tribulations." But, alas! we slept in such security, that the sound of the trumpet could never be perfectly understood by many, but we always persuaded ourselves of a certain tranquillity, as though the troubles, whereof mention is made in the scriptures of God, appertained not at all to this age, but unto such as of long time are passed before us; and therefore was our heavenly Father compelled to withdraw from us the presence of his verity, whose voice in those days we could not believe, to the end that more earnestly we may thirst for the same, and with more obedience embrace and receive it, if ever it shall please his infinite goodness in such abundance to restore the same again.

I mean nothing of those that followed Christ only for their bellies; for such, perceiving that they could not obtain their hearts' desire of Christ, have grudged, and left him in body and heart; which their blasphemous voices, spoken against his eternal verity, witness and declare. For such, brethren, be ye not moved, for in the time of their profession they were not of us, but were dissemblers and hypocrites, and therefore God justly permits that they

* Probable or apparent destruction. † Denied.

blaspheme the truth, which they never loved. I mean not that such dissembling hypocrites shall ever embrace the verity, but I mean such as, by infirmity of the flesh, and by natural blindness, which in this life is never altogether expelled, then could not give the full obedience which God's word required, neither now, by weakness of faith, dare openly and boldly confess that which their hearts know to be most true, and yet lament and mourn, both for the imperfection bypast and present. From such the amiable presence of Christ shall not be withdrawn for ever; but yet again shall the eyes of their sorely troubled hearts behold and see that light of Christ's gospel, wherein they most delight. We the ministers, who were the distributors of this bread, the true word of God, wherewith the multitude within England was fed, lacked not our offences, which also moved God to send us to the sea. And because the offences of no man are so manifest unto me as mine own, I will only censure myself.

It is not unknown unto many, that I (the most wretched) was once of that number whom God appointed to receive that bread, (as it was broken by Christ Jesus,) to distribute and give the same to such as he had called to this banquet, in that part of his table where he appointed me to serve. It is not in my knowledge nor judgment to define, nor determine what portion or quantity every man received of this bread, nor yet how that which they received agreed with their stomachs; but of this I am assured, that the benediction of Christ Jesus so multiplied the portion which I received of his hands, that during the banquet, (I write this to the praise of his name, and to the accusation of mine own unthankfulness,) the bread never failed when the hungry soul craved or cried for food. And at the end of the banquet, mine own conscience bears witness that mine hands gathered up the crumbs that were left, in such abundance, that the banquet was full amongst the rest. To be plain, mine own conscience bears record to myself, how small was my learning, and how weak I was of judgment, when Christ Jesus called me to be his steward; and if I should conceal how mightily, day by day, and time by time, he multiplied his graces with me, I were most wicked and unthankful.

But, alas! this day mine own conscience bears witness to myself, how blinded was my heart, and how little did I consider the dignity of that office, and the power of God,

who then multiplied and blessed the bread which the people received of my hands. I take God to record in my conscience, that I delivered the same bread which I received of Christ's hands; and that I mixed no poison with the same; that is, I taught Christ's gospel without any mixture of men's dreams, devices, or phantasies. But, alas! I did it not with such fervency, with such indifferency,* and with such diligence, as this day I know my duty was to have done.

Some complained in those days, That the preachers were indiscreet persons, yea, some called them railers, and worse, because they spake against the manifest iniquity of men, and especially of those who then were placed in authority, as well in the court, as in other offices universally throughout the realm, in cities, towns, and villages. And amongst others, peradventure, my rude plainness displeased some, who complained that I spoke rashly of men's faults; so that all men might know and perceive of whom I meant. But, alas! this day my conscience accuses me, that I spake not so plainly as my duty was to have done: for I ought to have said to the wicked man expressly by his name, "Thou shalt die the death." For I find Jeremiah the prophet did so to Pashur the high priest, and to Zedekiah the king. And not only he, but also Elijah, Elisha, Micah, Amos, Daniel, Christ Jesus himself, and after him his apostles, expressly named the blood-thirsty tyrants, abominable idolaters, and dissembling hypocrites of their days. If we the preachers within the realm of England, were appointed by God to be the salt of the earth, as his other messengers were before us, alas! why withheld we the salt, where manifest compunction did appear? (I accuse none but myself.) The blind love that I bore to this my wicked carcass, was the chief cause that I was not fervent and faithful enough in that respect: for I had no will to provoke the hatred of all men against me; and, therefore, I so touched the vices of men in the presence of the greatest, that they might see themselves to be offenders; (I dare not say that I was the greatest flatterer;) but yet, nevertheless, I would not be seen to proclaim manifest war against the manifestly wicked; whereof unfeignedly I ask my God mercy.

As I was not so fervent in rebuking manifest iniquity, as it became me to have been; so was I not so impartial a feeder as is required of Christ's steward. For, in preach-

* Impartiality.

ing Christ's gospel, albeit mine eye, as God knoweth, was not much upon worldly promotion, yet the love of friends, and carnal affection of some men with whom I was most familiar, allured me to make more residence in one place than in another, having more respect to the pleasure of a few, than to the necessity of many. That day I thought I had not sinned, if I had not been idle; but this day I know it was my duty to have had consideration how long I had remained in one place, and how many hungry souls were in other places, to whom, alas! none took pains to break and distribute the bread of life.

Moreover, when remaining in one place, I was not diligent as mine office required; but some time, by counsel of carnal friends, I spared the body; some time I spent in worldly business of particular friends; and some time in taking recreation and pastime by exercise of the body.

And albeit men may judge these to be light and small offences, yet I acknowledge and confess, that unless pardon should be granted to me in Christ's blood, every one of these three offences aforenamed, that is to say, lack of fervency in reproving sin, the lack of indifferency in feeding those that were hungry, and the lack of diligence in the execution of mine office, deserved damnation.

And besides these, I was assaulted, yea, infected and corrupted with more gross sins; that is, my wicked nature desired the favours, the estimation and praise of men; against which, albeit that some time the Spirit of God did move me to fight, and earnestly did stir, God knoweth I lie not, to sob and lament for those imperfections; yet they never ceased to trouble me, when any occasion was offered: and so privily and craftily did they enter into my breast, that I could not perceive myself to be wounded, till vain glory had almost gotten the upper hand.

"O Lord! be merciful to my great offence, and deal not with me according to my great iniquity, but according to the multitude of thy mercies, remove from me the burden of my sin; for of purpose and mind, to avoid the vain displeasure of man, I spared little to offend thy Majesty."

Think not, beloved in the Lord, that I thus accuse myself without just cause, as though in so doing I might appear more holy, or that I do it of purpose and intent to accuse others of my brethren, the true preachers of Christ, of like or greater offences. No, God is judge to my conscience, that I do it even from an unfeigned and sorely

troubled heart, knowing myself grievously to have offended the majesty of my God, during the time that Christ's gospel had free passage in England. And this I would have you understand, that the taking away of the heavenly bread, and this great tempest that now bloweth against the poor disciples of Christ within the realm of England, as it respects us, comes from the great mercy of our heavenly Father, to provoke us to unfeigned repentance; for neither preacher nor professor rightly considered the time of our merciful visitation: but we altogether so spent the time, as though God's word had been preached rather to satisfy our fancies than to reform our evil manners; which, if we earnestly repent, then shall Jesus Christ appear to our comfort, be the storm ever so great. "Haste, O Lord! for thy name's sake."

The SECOND thing I find to be noted is, The vehemency of the fear which the disciples endured in that great danger, being of longer continuance than ever they had at any time before.

In St. Matthew's gospel it appears, that another time there arose a great stormy tempest, which sorely tossed the boat wherein Christ's disciples were labouring: but that was nigh the daylight, and then they had Christ with them in the ship, whom they awaked, and cried for help unto him, for at that time he slept in the boat, and so they were shortly delivered from their sudden fear. But now were they in the midst of the raging sea, and it was night, and Christ their Comforter was absent from them, and came not to them, neither in the first, second, nor third watch. What fear think you were they in? and what thoughts arose out of their sorely troubled hearts during that storm? Such as this day are in like danger within the realm of England, do by this storm better understand, than my pen can express. But of one thing I am well assured, that Christ's presence would in that great perplexity have been to them more comfortable than ever it was before; and that they would patiently have suffered their incredulity to have been rebuked, so that they might have escaped the present death.

But profitable it shall be, and somewhat to our comfort, to consider every part of their danger: and first, you shall understand, That when the disciples passed to the sea, to obey Christ's commandment, it was fair weather, and no

such tempest was seen; but suddenly the storm arose, with a contrary blast of wind, when they were in the midst of their voyage. For if the tempest had been as great in the beginning of their entrance into the sea, as it was afterwards when they were about the midst of their passage, they would neither have adventured such a great danger; neither yet had it been in their power to have attained to the midst of the sea: and so it may be evidently gathered, that the sea was calm when they entered upon their voyage.

Then it is to be remarked, by what means and instruments this storm was moved. Was the plunging of their oars, and force of their small boat, such as might stir the waves of the great sea? No, doubtless; but the Holy Ghost declares, that the seas were moved by a vehement and contrary wind, which blew against their ship in the time of darkness—but since the wind is neither the commander nor mover of itself, some other cause is to be inquired, which hereafter we shall touch.

And lastly, it is to be noted and considered, What the disciples did in this vehement tempest—truly they turned not to be driven back to land or shore by the vehemence of the contrary wind; for so it might be thought that they could not have escaped shipwreck and death; but they continually laboured in rowing against the wind, abiding the ceasing of that horrible tempest.

Consider and mark, beloved in the Lord, what we read here to have befallen Christ's disciples and their poor boat; and you shall well perceive, that the same thing has happened, does, and shall happen, to the true church and congregation of Christ, which is nothing else in this miserable life but a poor ship, travelling in the seas of this unstable and troublesome world, toward the heavenly port, and haven of eternal felicity, which Christ Jesus has appointed to his elect.

This I might prove by the posterity of Jacob in Egypt; by the Israelites in their captivity; and by the church during the time that Christ himself preached, and also for some time after his resurrection and ascension; against whom the vehement storm did not rage immediately after they entered into the ship of their travel and tribulation. For the bloody sentence of Pharaoh was not pronounced against the seed of Jacob, when he first entered into Egypt; neither was the cruel counsel and devilish device

of proud Haman invented soon after Israel and Judah were translated from their possessions. Neither yet, in the time of Christ Jesus being conversant with his apostles in the flesh, was there used any such tyranny against the saints of God, as shortly after followed in the persecution of St. Stephen, and other disciples: but all these, in the beginning of their travel, with a contrary wind, had alway some calm; that is, albeit they had some trouble, yet had they not extreme persecution.

Even so, most dearly beloved, is happened now to the afflicted church of God within the realm of England. At all times the true word of God suffered contradiction and opposition; and so the wind blew against us, even from the beginning of the late uprising of the gospel in England. But yet it could not stop our course, till now of late days that the raging wind blows without bridle upon the unstable seas, in the midst whereof we are in this hour of darkness.

To write my mind plainly unto you, beloved brethren; This wind that always has blown against the church of God, is the malice and hatred of the devil, which rightly in this case is compared to the wind. For as the wind is invisible, and yet the poor disciples feel that it troubles and hinders their ship; so is the pestilent envy of the devil, working always in the hearts of the reprobate, so subtile and crafty, that it cannot be espied by God's elect, nor by his messengers, till first they feel the blasts thereof to blow their ship backward. And as the vehement wind causes the waves of the sea to rage, and yet the dead water neither knows what it does, neither yet can it cease nor refrain, so that it is troubled by the wind, and also itself troubles Christ's disciples in their poor ship. Thus by the envy and malice of the devil, are wicked and cruel subjects, as well as princes, whose hearts are like the raging sea, compelled to persecute and trouble the true church of Christ; and yet so blinded are they, and so enthralled under the bondage of the devil, that they neither can see their manifest iniquity, neither yet can they cease to run to their own destruction. And hereof, England, hast thou manifest experience; how, in the time of king Henry VIII., the wolf, that wicked Winchester, and others, by the vehement wind of six bloody articles,* devised by the devil, intended to have overthrown the poor ship and

* The act of Six Articles, enacted A. D. 1539, which enforced the principal errors of popery, excepting the papal supremacy.

Christ's disciples, is evidently known already. But then we had Christ Jesus with us sleeping in the ship, who did not despise the faithful crying of such as then were in trouble; but by his mighty power, gracious goodness, and invincible force of his holy word, he compelled those wicked winds to cease, and the raging of those seas to be stilled and calm. So that all the hearts of God's elect, within the realm of England, did wonder at that sudden change, while under a lamb,* the fearful edge of that devouring sword was taken from the necks of the faithful; and the tyranny of those ravening and blood-thirsty wolves (I mean wily Winchester, and some others his brethren, the sons of Belial) was repressed for a time.

But the devil ceased not to blow his wind, by his wicked instruments, who found the means, how, against nature, the one brother should assent to the death of the other:† yet that could not hinder the course of the travelling boat, but forth she went in despite of the devil; who then more cruelly raged, perceiving his own honour and service, that is, his detestable mass, to be disclosed and opened before the people, to be damnable idolatry, and assured damnation to such as put their trust in it. Therefore began he more craftily to work, and finding the same instruments apt enough, whose labours he had used before, he blew such mortal hatred between two, which appeared to be the chief pillars under the king; for that wretched, alas! and miserable Northumberland could not be satisfied, till such time as simple Somerset most unjustly was bereft of his life. What the devil, and his members, the pestilent papists, meant, by taking him away, God compelled my tongue to speak in more places than one; and specially before you, and in Newcastle, as Sir Robert Bradling did not forget a long time after. God grant that he may understand all other matters spoken before him then, and at other times, as rightly as he did that mine interpretation of the vineyard, whose hedges, ditches, towers, and winepress, God destroyed, because it would bring forth no good fruit; and that he may remember, that whatever was spoken by my mouth that day, is now complete, and come to pass; except that final destruction and vengeance is not yet fallen upon the greatest offenders, as assuredly shortly

* Edward VI.

† Sir Thomas Seymour, lord admiral, brother to the duke of Somerset, was beheaded for treasonable practices in 1549.

it shall, unless that he, and some others of his sort, who then were enemies to God's truth, will speedily repent, and that earnestly, of their stubborn disobedience. God compelled my tongue, I say, openly to declare, That the devil and his ministers intended only the subversion of God's true religion, by that mortal hatred among those who ought to have been most assuredly knit together by christian charity, and by benefits received; and especially that the wicked and envious papists, by that ungodly breach of charity, diligently minded the overthrow of him, who to his own destruction procured the death of his innocent friend.* Thus, I say, I was compelled of conscience oftener than once to affirm, That such as saw, and invented the means how the one should be taken away, saw, and should find the means also to take away the other; and that all that trouble was devised by the devil and his instruments, to stop and hinder Christ's disciples and their poor boat; but he was not able, because she was not yet come to the midst of the sea.

Transubstantiation, the bird that the devil hatched by pope Nicolas,† and since that time fostered and nourished by all his children, priests, friars, monks, and others his conjured and sworn soldiers, and in these last days, chiefly by Stephen Gardiner, and his black brood in England. Transubstantiation, I say, was then clearly confuted and mightily overthrown; and therefore God has put wisdom in the tongues of his ministers and messengers to disclose that vanity; and specially gave such strength to that reverend father in God Thomas Cranmer, to cut the knots of devilish sophistry, linked and knit by the devil's Gardiner, and his blind buzzards, to hold the verity of the ever living God under bondage, that I rather think they shall condemn his works, which notwithstanding shall continue and

* Knox here refers to the duke of Somerset, who was beheaded January 22, 1552. Strype says "His death was brought about by a faction, headed by the proud duke of Northumberland;" and, after mentioning particularly those who were most active therein, he adds, "In the end, what became of Northumberland himself, the great wheel of all, that procured the duke of Somerset's death? He also perished, not long after, unpitied by all."—*Memorials*, ii. 537. The duke of Northumberland, the father of lady Jane Grey, was imprisoned on the accession of queen Mary, and was beheaded in January, 1555, soon after the suppression of Wyat's insurrection.

† The doctrine of transubstantiation was established by pope Innocent III., at the council of Lateran, A D. 1216. Nicholas I. was pope A. D. 858.

remain to their confusion, than that they shall enterprise to answer the same. And also God gave boldness and knowledge to the court of parliament, to take away the round-clipped god,* wherein standeth all the holiness of papists, and to command common bread to be used at the Lord's table, and also to take away the most part of superstitions, kneeling at the Lord's Supper excepted, which before profaned Christ's true religion. Then, dear brethren, was the boat in the midst of the sea, and suddenly arose the horrible tempest, most fearful and dolorous; "Our king is taken away from us:" and the devil bloweth in such organs,† as he had always found obedient to his precepts; and by them he inflamed the heart of that wretched and unhappy man, whom I judge more to be lamented than hated,‡ to covet the imperial crown of England to be established to his posterity; and what thereupon has succeeded, it is not now necessary to be written.

Of this short discourse, beloved in the Lord, you may consider and perceive two special notes;

1. That the whole malice of the devil has always this end, to vex and overthrow Christ's afflicted church; for what else intended the devil and his servants, the pestilent papists, by all these their crafty policies, during the time that Christ's gospel was preached in England, than the subversion of the same gospel, and that they might recover power to persecute the saints of God; as this day, in the hour of darkness, they have obtained for a time, to their own destruction? Let no man wonder though I say, that the crafty policies of pestilent papists wrought all the mischief; for who could easier and better work greater mischief than such as bore authority and rule? And who, I pray you, ruled the roast in the court all this time, by stout courage and proudness of stomach, but Northumberland? But who, I pray you, under king Edward, ruled all by counsel and wit? Shall I name the man? I will write no more plainly now than my tongue spake, the last sermon it pleased God that I made before that innocent and most godly king Edward VI. and before his council at Westminster, and even to the faces of such as of whom I meant; handling this place of Scripture, "He

* The consecrated wafer used in the Romish sacrament of the altar.
† Inspires such instruments.
‡ The Duke of Northumberland, father of lady Jane Grey.

that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me;" I made this affirmation, That commonly it was seen, that the most godly princes had officers and chief counsellors most ungodly, conjured sworn enemies to God's true religion, and traitors to their princes. Not that their wickedness and ungodliness was speedily perceived and espied out, by the said princes and godly men, but that for a time those crafty colourers could so cloak their malice against God and his truth, and their hollow hearts toward their loving masters, that, by worldly wisdom and policy, at length they attained to high promotions. And, for the proof of this mine affirmation, I recited the histories of Ahithophel, Shebna, and Judas; of whom the two former had high offices and promotions, with great authority, under the most godly princes David and Hezekiah; and Judas was purse-master with Christ Jesus. And when I had made some discourse on that matter, I moved this question:

"Why such godly princes permitted such wicked men to be of their council, and to bear office and authority under them?"

To which I answered, That they so abounded in worldly wisdom, foresight, and experience touching the government of a commonwealth, that their counsel appeared to be so necessary, that the commonwealth could not lack them; and so, by the colour to preserve the tranquillity and quietness in realms, they were maintained in authority. Or else they kept their malice, which they bore towards their masters and God's true religion, so secret in their breasts, that no man could espy it, till, by God's permission, they waited for such occasion and opportunity, that they uttered all their mischief so plainly, that all the world might perceive it. And that was most evident by Ahithophel and Shebna; for of Ahithophel it is written, that he was David's most secret counsellor; and that because his counsel in those days was like the oracle of God. And Shebna was some time comptroller, some time secretary unto good king Hezekiah, and last of all treasurer; to which offices he had never been promoted under so godly a prince, if the treason and malice which he bore against the king, and against God's true religion, had been manifestly known. No, say I, Shebna was a crafty fox, and could show such a fair countenance to the king, that neither he nor his council could espy his malicious treason; but the

prophet Isaiah was commanded by God to go to his presence, and to declare his traitorous heart and miserable end.

Were David, said I, and Hezekiah, princes of great and godly gifts and experience, abused by crafty counsellors and dissembling hypocrites? What wonder is it then, that a young and innocent king should be deceived by crafty, covetous, wicked, and ungodly counsellors? I am greatly afraid, that Ahithophel is counsellor, that Judas bears the purse, and that Shebna is scribe, comptroller, and treasurer.

This, and somewhat more I spake that day, not in a corner, as many yet can witness, but even before those whom my conscience judged worthy of accusation: and this day no more do I write, albeit I may justly, because they have declared themselves most manifestly, but yet do I affirm, that under that innocent king, pestilent papists had greatest authority. Oh! who was judged to be the soul and life to the council, in every matter of weighty importance? Who but Shebna,* who could best despatch business, that the rest of the council might hawk and hunt, and take their pleasure? None like unto Shebna. Who was most frank and ready to destroy Somerset, and set up Northumberland? Was it not Shebna? Who was most bold to cry, Bastard, bastard, incestuous bastard, Mary shall never reign over us? And who, I pray you, was most busy to say, Fear not to subscribe with my lords of the king's majesty's most honourable privy council? Agree to his majesty's last will and perfect testament, and never let that obstinate woman come to authority: she is an arrant papist, she will subvert the true religion, and will bring in strangers, to the destruction of this commonwealth. Which of the council, I say, had these and greater persuasions against Mary, to whom now he crouches and kneels? Shebna the treasurer. And what intended such traitorous and dissembling hypocrites by all these and

* Knox refers to William Paulet, earl of Wiltshire and marquis of Winchester, who was comptroller, secretary, and, lastly, lord treasurer to Edward VI., and was continued in that office by queen Mary. Bishop Ponet alluded to him as one that wrote earnestly to Cranmer in favour of lady Jane, and railed against princess Mary; yet, within a few days, when Cranmer was sent to the Tower for unwilling obedience to the resolution of the council, he was not ashamed to sit among his examiners, and to treat him with severity. —*Strype's Memorials*, iii. 141.

such like crafty sleights and counterfeit conveyance? Doubtless, the overthrow of Christ's true religion, which then began to flourish in England, the liberty whereof fretted such pestilent papists, who now have gotten the days which they long looked for, but yet to their own destruction and shame; for, in spite of their hearts, the plagues of God shall strike them, they shall be comprehended in the snare which they prepare for others: for their own counsels shall make them slaves to a proud, mischievous, unfaithful, and vile nation.

II. Now to the second note of our discourse, which is this; Albeit the tyrants of this earth have learned, by long experience, that they are never able to prevail against God's truth; yet, because they are bound slaves to their master, the devil, they cannot cease to persecute the members of Christ, when the devil blows his wind in the darkness of the night; that is, when the light of Christ's gospel is taken away, and the devil reigns by idolatry, superstition, and tyranny.

This most evidently may be seen from the beginning of the world to the time of Christ, and from thence till this day. Ishmael might have perceived, that he could not prevail against Isaac, because God had made his promise unto him, as no doubt Abraham, their father, taught to his whole household. Esau likewise understood the same of Jacob; Pharaoh might plainly have seen, by many miracles, that Israel was God's people whom he could not utterly destroy; and also the scribes and pharisees, and chief priests, were fully convinced in their conscience, that Christ's whole doctrine was of God, his miracles and works were wrought by the power of God, and that for the profit and advantage of man; and therefore, that they could never prevail against him; yet, as the devil stirred them, none of those could refrain from persecuting him whom they knew most certainly to be innocent.

This I write, that you shall not wonder, albeit now ye see the poisoned papists, wicked Winchester, and dreaming Duresme,* with the rest of the faction, who sometimes were so confounded, that neither they durst, nor could, speak nor write in the defence of their heresies, now so to rage and triumph against the eternal truth of God, as though they had never assayed the power of God speaking by his true messengers.

* Gardiner bishop of Winchester, Tonstal bishop of Durham.

Wonder not hereat, I say, beloved brethren, that the tyrants of this world are so obedient, and ready to follow the cruel counsels of such disguised monsters; for neither can the one nor the other refrain, because both sorts are as subject to obey the devil, their prince and father, as the unstable sea is to lift up the waves when the vehement wind bloweth upon it.

It is fearful to be heard, that the devil has such power over any man, but yet the word of God has so instructed us; and therefore, albeit it be contrary to our fancy, yet we must believe it; for the devil is called the prince and god of this world, because he reigneth, and is honoured by tyranny and idolatry in it.

He is called the prince of darkness, that hath power in the air. It is said, That he worketh in the children of unbelief, because he stirs them up to trouble God's elect; as he invaded Saul, and compelled him to persecute David; and likewise he entered into the heart of Judas, and moved him to betray his Master. He is called prince over the sons of pride, and father of all those that are liars and enemies to God's truth; over whom he has no less power this day, than beforetime he had over Annas and Caiaphas, whom no man denies to have been led and moved by the devil to persecute Christ Jesus and his most true doctrine. And, therefore, wonder not, I say, that now the devil rages in his obedient servants, wily Winchester, dreaming Duresme, and bloody Bonner, with the rest of their bloody butcherly brood. For this is their hour and power granted unto them; they cannot cease nor assuage their furious fumes, for the devil, their sire, stirs up and moves, and carries them even at his will. But in this that I declare of the power of the devil working in cruel tyrants, think you that I attribute or give to him or them power at their pleasure? No, not so, brethren, not so: for as the devil has no power to trouble the elements, but as God shall suffer; so worldly tyrants, albeit the devil has fully possessed their hearts, have no power at all to trouble the saints of God, but as their bridle shall be loosed by God's hands.

And herein, dear brethren, stands my singular comfort this day, when I hear that those bloody tyrants within the realm of England, do kill, murder, destroy, and devour man and woman, as ravenous lions now loosed from bonds. I lift up the eyes of mine heart, as far as my iniquity and

present dolour will suffer, and to my heavenly Father I will say,

"O Lord! those cruel tyrants are loosed by thy hand, to punish our former ingratitude, whom, we trust, thou wilt not suffer to prevail for ever; but when thou hast corrected us a little, and hast declared unto the world the tyranny that lurked in their boldened breasts, then wilt thou break their jaw-bones, and wilt shut them up in their caves again, that the generation and posterity following may praise thy holy name before thy congregation. Amen."

When I feel any taste or motion of these promises, then I think myself most happy, and that I have received a just compensation, albeit I, and all that belong to me in earth, should suffer present death; knowing that God shall yet show mercy to his afflicted church within England, and that he shall repress the pride of these present tyrants, as he has done of those that were before our days.

And therefore, beloved brethren in our Saviour Jesus Christ, hold up to God your hands that are faint through fear; and let your hearts, that have, in these dolorous days, slept in sorrow, awake and hear the voice of your God, who sweareth by himself, That he will not suffer his church to be oppressed for ever, neither will he despise our sobs to the end, if we will row and strive against this vehement wind. I mean, that if you will not run back headlong to idolatry, then shall this storm be assuaged in despite of the devil. Christ Jesus shall come with speed to your deliverance, he shall pierce through the wind, and the raging seas shall obey, and bear his feet and body, as the massy, stable, and dry land. Be not moved from the sure foundation of your faith; for albeit that Christ Jesus be absent from you, by his bodily presence, as he was from his disciples in that great storm, yet is he present by his mighty power and grace. He stands upon the mountain in security and rest; that is, his flesh and whole humanity* is now in heaven, and can suffer no such trouble as sometimes he did, and yet he is full of pity and compassion, and considers all our travail, anguish, and labours; wherefore it is not to be doubted but that he will suddenly appear to our great comfort. The tyranny of this world cannot keep back his coming, any more than the blustering wind and raging seas could keep Christ from coming to

* His human nature, his body.

his disciples, when they looked for nothing but present death.

And therefore, yet again I say, beloved in the Lord, let your hearts attend to the promises that God has made unto true repentant sinners; and be fully persuaded with a constant faith, that God is always true, and just in his performance of his promises. You have heard these days spoken of very plainly, when your hearts could fear no danger, because you were nigh the land, and the storm was not yet risen; that is, you were young scholars of Christ, when no persecution was felt or seen. But now you are come into the midst of the sea, for what part of England heard not of your profession? and the vehement storm, whereof we then spoke, in almost every exhortation, is now suddenly risen up. But what! hath God brought you so far forth that you shall, both in souls and bodies, every one perish? Nay, my whole trust in God's mercy and truth is to the contrary. For God brought not his people into Egypt, and from thence through the Red Sea, to the intent they should perish, but that he in them should show a most glorious deliverance. Neither sent Christ his apostles into the midst of the sea, and suffered the storm to assault them and their ship, to the intent they should there perish; but because he would the more have his great goodness towards them felt and received, in so mightily delivering them out of the fear of perishing; giving us thereby an example that he would do the like to us, if we abide constant in our profession and faith, withdrawing ourselves from superstition and idolatry.

We gave you warning of those days long ago: for the reverence of Christ's blood, let these words be noted; "The same truth that spake before of these dolorous days, forespake also of the everlasting joy prepared for such as should continue to the end." The trouble is come, O dear brethren! look for the comfort, and, after the example of the apostle, abide in resisting this vehement storm a little space.

The third watch is not yet ended; remember that Christ Jesus came not to his disciples till it was the fourth watch, and they were then in no less danger than you are now; for their faith fainted, and their bodies were in danger. But Christ Jesus came when they looked not for him; and so shall he do to you, if you will continue in the profession that you have made. This dare I be bold to promise, in the name of him whose eternal verity and glorious gospel

you have heard and received, who also puts into my heart an earnest thirst, God knoweth I lie not, for your salvation, and some care also for your bodies, which now I will not express.

Thus shortly have I passed through the outrageous tempest, wherein the disciples of Christ were tempted, after the great multitude were, by Christ, fed in the desert, omitting many profitable notes which might well have been marked in the text, because my purpose is, at this present, not to be tedious, nor yet curious, but only to note such things as are agreeable to these most dolorous days.

And so, let us now speak of the end of this storm and trouble, in which I find four things chiefly to be noted.

First, That the disciples, at the presence of Christ, were more affrighted than they were before.

Secondly, That Christ uses no other instrument but his word, to pacify their hearts.

Thirdly, That Peter, in a fervency, first left his ship, and yet afterwards feared.

Fourthly and *lastly*, That Christ permitted neither Peter, nor the rest of his disciples, to perish in that fear, but gloriously delivered all, and pacified the tempest.

Their great fear, and the cause thereof, are expressed in the text, in these words; "When the disciples saw him walking upon the sea, they were afraid, saying, 'It is a spirit;' and they cried through fear."

It is not my purpose in this treatise to speak of spirits, nor yet to dispute, whether spirits, good or bad, may appear and trouble men; neither yet to inquire why man's nature is afraid of spirits, and so vehemently abhors their presence and company; but my purpose is only to speak of things necessary for this time.

And, first, let us consider that there were three causes why the disciples knew not Christ, but judged him to be a spirit.

The first cause was, The darkness of the night.

The second was, The unaccustomed vision that appeared.

And the third was, The danger and the tempest, in which they so earnestly laboured for the safeguard of themselves.

The darkness, I say, of the night, prevented their eyes from seeing him; and it was above nature, that a massy,

heavy, and weighty body of a man, such as they understood their master, Christ, to have, should walk, go upon, or be borne up by the water of the raging sea, and not sink. And, finally, the horror of the tempest, and great danger that they were in, persuaded them to look for none other, but certainly to be drowned.

And so all these three things, concurring together, confirmed in them this imagination, That Christ Jesus, who came to their great comfort and deliverance, was a fearful and wicked spirit appearing to their destruction.

What here happened to Christ Jesus himself, I might prove to have befallen, and daily to happen, to the verity of his blessed word in all ages from the beginning.

For as Christ himself, in this their trouble was judged and esteemed by his disciples at the first sight a spirit, or fantastical* body; so is the truth and the sincere preaching of his glorious gospel, sent by God for man's comfort, deliverance from sin, and quietness of conscience, when it is first offered, and truly preached; it is, I say, judged to be no less than heresy and deceivable doctrine, sent by the devil for man's destruction.

The cause hereof is the dark ignorance of God, which, in every age, since the beginning, so overwhelmed the world, that sometimes God's very elect were in like blindness and error with the reprobate; as Abraham was an idolater; Moses was instructed in all the ways of the Egyptians; Paul, a proud Pharisee, was sworn against Christ and his doctrine: and many in this our age, when the truth of God was offered unto them, were sore afraid, and cried against it, only because the dark clouds of ignorance had troubled them before. But this matter I omit and let pass, till further opportunity.

The chief note that I would have you well observe and mark, in this preposterous fear of the disciples, is this: The more nigh deliverance and salvation approaches, the more strong and vehement is the temptation of the church of God; and the more nigh God's vengeance approaches to the wicked, the more proud, cruel, and arrogant are they.

Whereby it commonly comes to pass, that the very messengers of life are judged and deemed to be the authors of all mischief; and this in many histories is evident. When God had appointed to deliver the afflicted Israelites,

* Fancied.

by the hand of Moses, from the tyranny of the Egyptians, and Moses was sent to the presence of Pharaoh for the same purpose, such was their affliction and anguish by the cruelty which was newly exercised over them, that with open mouths they cursed Moses, and, no doubt, in their hearts they hated God who sent him, alleging, that Moses and Aaron were the whole cause of their last extreme trouble.

The like is to be seen in the book of the Kings, both under Elisha and Isaiah the prophets. For in the days of Joram, son of Ahab, Samaria was besieged by the king of Syria: in which Samaria, no doubt, albeit the king and most of the multitude were wicked, there were yet some members of God's elect church, who were brought to such extreme famine, that not only things of small price were sold beyond all measure, but also women, against nature, were compelled to eat their own children. In this same city Elisha the prophet most commonly was conversant and dwelt, by whose counsel and commandment, no doubt, the city was kept; for it appears, that the king laid it to his charge, when he, hearing of the piteous complaint of the woman, who, for hunger had eaten her own son, rent his clothes, with a solemn oath and vow that the head of Elisha should not stand upon his shoulders that day. If Elisha had not been of counsel, that the city should have been kept, why should the king have more fumed against him than against others? But whether he were the author of the defending of the city, or not, all is one to my purpose; for before the deliverance the church was in such extremity, that the chief pastor of that time was sought to be killed by such as should have defended him.

The like is read of Hezekiah, who defending his city Jerusalem, and resisting proud Sennacherib, no doubt obeying the counsel of Isaiah, at length was so oppressed with sorrow and shame by the blasphemous words of Rabshakeh, that he had no other refuge but in the temple of the Lord, as a man desperate and without comfort, to open the disdainful letters sent unto him by that haughty and proud tyrant. By these and many histories more, it is most evident, that the more nigh salvation and deliverance approaches, the more vehement is the temptation and trouble.

This I write to admonish you, that albeit you shall see

tribulation so abound, that nothing shall appear but extreme misery, without all hope of comfort; yet you should not decline from God: and that albeit sometimes you are moved to hate the messengers of life, that therefore you shall not judge that God will never show mercy afterwards. No, dear brethren, as he hath dealt with others before you, so will he deal with you.

God will suffer tribulation and dolour to abound, that no manner of comfort shall be seen in man, to the intent that when deliverance cometh the glory may be his, whose only word may pacify the most vehement tempest.

He drowned Pharaoh and his army; he scattered the great multitude of Benhadad; and by his angel killed the host of Sennacherib; and so delivered his afflicted, when nothing appeared to them but utter destruction. So shall he do to you, beloved brethren, if you will patiently abide his consolation and counsel. God open your eyes, that you may rightly understand the meaning of my writing. Amen.

But yet peradventure, you wonder not a little why God permits such blood-thirsty tyrants to molest and grieve his chosen church. I have recited some causes before, and I could recite yet more, but at this time I will hold myself content with one. The justice of God is such, that he will not pour forth his extreme vengeance upon the wicked, until such time as their iniquity is so manifest, that their very flatterers cannot excuse it. Pharaoh was not destroyed, till his own household-servants and subjects abhorred and condemned his stubborn disobedience. Jezebel and Athaliah were not thrust from this life into death, till all Israel and Judah were witnesses of their cruelty and abominations. Judas was not hanged, till the princes of the priests bore witness of his traitorous act and iniquity.

To pass over the tyrants of old times, whom God hath plagued, let us come to the tyrants, who now are within the realm of England, whom God will not long spare. If Stephen Gardiner, Cuthbert Tonstal, and butcherly Bonner, false bishops of Winchester, Duresme, and of London, had for their false doctrine and traitorous acts suffered death, when they justly deserved the same, then would arrant papists have alleged, as I and others have heard them do, that they were men reformable; that they were meet instruments for a commonwealth; that they were

not so obstinate and malicious as they were judged; and that they thirsted not for the blood of any man. And of lady Mary, who has not heard, that she was sober, merciful, and one that loved the commonwealth of England? Had she, I say, and such as now are of her pestilent council, been dead before these days, then their iniquity and cruelty should not so manifestly have appeared to the world; for who would have thought that such cruelty could have entered into the heart of a woman, and into the heart of her that is called a virgin, that she would thirst for the blood of innocents, and of such as by just laws and faithful witnesses, can never be proved to have offended?

I find that Athaliah, through appetite to reign, murdered the seed of the kings of Judah, and that Herodias's daughter, at the desire of an adulterous mother, obtained the head of John the Baptist; but yet that ever a woman who suffered herself to be called 'the most blessed virgin,' caused so much blood to be spilt for establishing the usurped authority of the pope, I think the like is rarely to be found in scripture or other history.

I find that Jezebel, that cursed idolatress, caused the blood of the prophets of God to be shed, and Naboth to be murdered unjustly for his own vineyard; but yet I think she never erected half so many gibbets in all Israel, as mischievous Mary hath done within London alone.* But you papists will excuse your Mary the virgin: well, let her be your virgin,† and a goddess meet to entertain such idolaters, yet shall I rightly lay to her charge, that which I think, no papist within England will justify or defend. And therefore, O ye papists! here I will a little turn my pen unto you: answer unto this question, O ye seed of the serpent! Would any of you have confessed two years ago, that Mary, your mirror, had been false, dissembling, inconstant, proud, and a breaker of promises, except such

* Seventeen gallows were erected in the most public places of London upon which forty-eight prisoners, taken with Sir Thomas Wyat, were executed.

† Harpsfield, archdeacon of London, preaching before the convocation shortly after the accession of queen Mary, commended her in terms of the grossest adulation. Amongst other misapplications of scripture he parodied the words written of Deborah, (Judges v. 7, 8.) and applied them thus, "Religion ceased in England, it was at rest, until Mary arose, a virgin arose in England. The Lord chose new wars." Many others used similar language.—*Strype's Memorials.*

promises as she made to your god the pope, to the great shame and dishonour of her noble father? I am sure you would hardly have thought it of her. And now, does she not manifestly show herself to be an open traitress to the imperial crown of England, contrary to the just laws of the realm, to bring in a stranger, and make a proud Spaniard king, to the shame, dishonour, and destruction of the nobility; to the spoil of their honours, lands, possessions, chief offices, and promotion of them and theirs; to the utter decay of the treasures, commodities, navy, and fortifications of the realm; to the abasing of the yeomanry, to the slavery of the commonalty, to the overthrow of christianity and God's true religion; and finally, to the utter subversion of the whole public estate and commonwealth of England? Let Norfolk and Suffolk,* let her own promise and proclamation, let her father's testament, let the city of London, let the ancient laws and acts of parliaments before established in England, be judges betwixt my accusation and her most tyrannical iniquity.

First, her promise and proclamation signified and declared, That neither would she bring in, neither yet marry any stranger; Norfolk, Suffolk, and the city of London, do testify and witness the same. The ancient laws and acts of parliament pronounce it treason to transfer the crown of England into the hands of a foreign nation; and the oath made to observe the said statutes crieth out, That all are perjured who consent to that her traitorous fact.

Speak now, O ye papists! and defend your monstrous mistress; and deny, if you can for shame, that she has not uttered herself, to be born, alas, therefore, to the ruin and destruction of noble England. Oh! who would ever have believed, I write now in bitterness of heart, that such unnatural cruelty should have had dominion over any reasonable creature! But the saying seems to be true, that the usurped government of an affectionate woman, is a rage without reason.

Who would ever have thought, that the love of that realm, which has brought forth, which has nourished, and so nobly maintained that wicked woman, should not have moved her heart with pity? Who sees not now, that she,

* Upon the death of Edward VI., Mary pledged her word to the men of Norfolk and Suffolk, that she would not interfere with the public profession of the protestant religion.

in all her doings, declares most manifestly that under an English name she beareth a Spaniard's heart? If God, I say, had not for our scourge suffered her and her cruel council to have come to authority, then never could these their abominations, cruelty, and treason, against God, against his saints, and against the realm, whose liberties they are sworn to defend, so manifestly have been declared. And who ever could have believed, that proud Gardiner, and treacherous Tonstal, whom all papists praised, for the love they bore to their country, could have become so manifestly traitorous, not only against their solemn oaths, that they should never consent nor agree unto, that a foreign stranger should reign over England, but also, that they should adjudge the imperial crown of the same to appertain to a Spaniard by inheritance, or lineal descent?* O traitorous traitors! how can you for shame show your faces?

It comes to my mind, that, upon Christmas-day, 1552, preaching in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and speaking against the obstinacy of the papists, I made this affirmation, That whosoever in his heart was an enemy to Christ's gospel and doctrine, which then was preached within the realm of England, was an enemy also to God, and a secret traitor to the crown and commonwealth of England. For as they thirsted after nothing more than the king's death, which their iniquity could procure; so they regarded not who should reign over them, so that their idolatry might be erected again. How these my words at that time pleased men, the crimes and action intended against me did declare. But let my very enemies now say from their conscience, if those my words have not proved true.

What is the cause that Winchester, and the rest of his pestilent sect, so greedily would have a Spaniard to reign over England? The cause is very manifest; for as that nation surmounts all others, in pride and licentiousness, so, for idolatry, vain, papistical, and devilish ceremonies, they may rightly be called the very sons of superstition; and therefore are they found and judged, by the progeny of antichrist, most apt instruments to maintain, establish, and defend the kingdom of that cruel beast,† whose head and wound is lately cured within England, which, alas, for

* The papists very eagerly promoted the marriage of queen Mary to Philip king of Spain, son of the emperor Charles V.

† The papacy. Rev. xiii. xvii., &c.

pity! must now be brought into bondage and thraldom, that pestilent papists may reign without punishment.

I speak to thee, Winchester, more cruel than any tiger—shall neither shame, nor fear, nor benefits received, bridle thy tyrannous cruelty? Art thou not ashamed, to betray thy native country, and the liberties of the same? Fearest thou not to open such a door to all iniquity, that England should be made a common stew for Spaniards? Wilt thou recompense the benefits which thou hast received of that noble realm with such ingratitude? Rememberest thou not, that England brought thee forth; that England nourished thee; that England promoted thee to riches, honour, and high dignity? And wilt thou now, O wretched caitiff! for all these manifold benefits received, be the cause that England shall not be England? Yea, verily, for so wilt thou gratify thy father the devil, and his lieutenant the pope, whom, with all his baggage, thou labourest now, by all means, to make flourish again in England; albeit, like a dissembling hypocrite, and double-faced wretch, thou being thereto compelled by the invincible verity of God's holy word, didst write, long ago, thy book entitled "True Obedience,"* against that monstrous harlot of Babylon, and her falsely usurped power and authority: but now, to thy perpetual shame, thou returnest to thy vomit, and art become an open arch-papist again. Furthermore, why seekest thou the blood of Thomas Cranmer, of good father Hugh Latimer, and of that most learned and discreet man doctor Ridley? Dost thou not consider, that the lenity, sincere doctrine, pure life, godly conversation, and discreet counsel of these three, is notably known in more realms than England? Art thou not ashamed to seek the destruction of those, who laboured for the safeguard of thy life, and obtained the same, when thou justly deservedst death?†

But, O thou son of Belial! well declarest thou, that nothing can modify the cruel malice, nor purge the deadly

* Gardiner wrote this book, which was entitled "De vera Obedientia," to justify the parliament in giving Henry VIII. the title of supreme head of the church. He therein stated his desire "to withdraw that counterfeit vain opinion out of the common people's minds, which *the false pretended power of the bishop of Rome* for the space of certain years had blinded them withal." Bonner wrote a preface to the second edition, in which he strongly inveighed against the pope. As Becon said, "Thus did these two divines write and think of the pope, who afterwards became his chief champions!"

† For Gardiner's opposition to the government of Edward VI.

venom of him, in whose heart wickedness bears the dominion : thou art like to Cain, and fellow to Judas the traitor ; and therefore canst thou do nothing, but thirst for the blood of Abel, and betray Christ Jesus and his eternal verity.

Thus, dear brethren, must the sons of the devil declare their own impiety and ungodliness, that when God's vengeance, which shall not sleep, shall be poured forth upon them, all tongues shall confess, acknowledge, and say, That God is righteous in all his judgments ; and to this end are cruel tyrants permitted and suffered for a time, not only to live in wealth and prosperity, but also to prevail and obtain victory, as touching the flesh, over the true saints of God, and over such as enterprise to resist their fury at God's commandment. But now to that which follows.

The instrument and means wherewith Christ Jesus used to remove and put away the horrible fear and anguish of his disciples, is his holy word ; for so it is written, "But by and by Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good comfort, it is I, be not afraid." The natural man that cannot understand the power of God, would have desired some other present comfort in so great a danger ; as, either to have had the heavens opened, to show unto them such light in that darkness, that Christ might have been fully known by his own face ; or else, that the winds and raging waves of the seas suddenly should have ceased ; or some other miracle which had been subject to all their senses, whereby they might have perfectly known that they were delivered from all danger. And truly, it had been the same to Christ Jesus to have done any of these, or any greater work, as to have said, "It is I, be not afraid :" but willing to teach us the dignity and effectual power of his most holy word, he uses no other instrument to pacify the great and horrible fear of his disciples but his comfortable word, and lively voice. And this is not done only at one time, but whensoever his church is in such a strait and perplexity, that nothing appears but extreme calamity, desolation, and ruin ; then the first comfort that ever it receives, is by the means of his word and promise ; as may appear in the troubles and temptations of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Paul.

To Abraham was given no other defence, after he had discomfited four kings, whose posterity and lineage, no doubt, he, being a stranger, greatly feared, but only this

promise of God made to him by his holy word, "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy buckler;" that is, thy protection and defence.

The same we find of Isaac, who flying from the place of his accustomed habitation, compelled thereto by hunger, got no other comfort nor conduct but this promise only, "I will be with thee."

In all the journeys and temptations of Jacob the same is to be espied; as when he fled from his father's house for fear of his brother Esau; when he returned from Laban; and when he feared the inhabitants of the region of the Canaanites and Perizzites for the slaughter of the Shechemites committed by his sons; he received no other defence, but only God's word and promise.

And this is most evident in Moses, and in the afflicted church under him when Moses himself was in such despair, that he was bold to chide with God, saying, "Why hast thou sent me? For since that time I have come to Pharaoh, to speak in thy name, he hath oppressed this people; neither yet hast thou delivered thy people."

This same expostulation of Moses declares how sorely he was tempted; yea, and what opinion he had conceived of God; that is, That God was either impotent, and could not deliver his people from such a tyrant's hand; or else, That he was mutable, and unjust in his promises. And this same, and sorer temptations, assaulted the people; for in anguish of heart, they both refused God and Moses, as we have before partly touched. And what means did God use to comfort them in that great extremity? Did he straightway suddenly kill Pharaoh, the great tyrant?—No. Did he send them a legion of angels to defend and deliver them?—No such thing: but he only recites and beats into their ears his former promises to them, which oftentimes they had before; and yet the rehearsal of the same wrought so mightily in the heart of Moses, that not only was bitterness and despair removed away, but also he was inflamed with such boldness, that without fear he went in again to the presence of the king, after he had been threatened and repulsed by him.

This I write, beloved in the Lord, since you know the word of God not only to be that whereby heaven and earth were created, but also to be the power of God to salvation to all that believe, the bright lantern to the feet of those who by nature walk in darkness, the life to those

that by sin are dead, a comfort to such as are in tribulation, the tower of defence to such as are most feeble, the wisdom and great felicity of such as delight in the same. And, to be short, you know God's word to be of such efficacy and strength, that thereby sin is purged, death vanquished, tyrants suppressed; and, finally, the devil, the author of all mischief, overthrown and confounded. This, I say, I write, that you, knowing this of the holy word, and most blessed gospel and voice of God, which once you have heard, I trust to your comfort, may now, in this hour of darkness, and most raging tempest, thirst and pray, that you may hear yet once again this amiable voice of our Saviour Christ, "Be of good comfort, it is I, fear not." And also, that you may receive some consolation from that blessed gospel which before you have professed, assuredly knowing, that God shall be no less merciful unto you, than he has been to others afflicted for his name's sake before you; and albeit God speedily removes not this horrible darkness, neither suddenly pacifies this tempest, yet shall he not suffer his tossed ship to be drowned.

Remember, brethren, that God's vengeance plagued not Pharaoh the first year of his tyranny. Neither did the dogs devour and consume both the flesh and bones of wicked Jezebel, when she first erected and set up her idolatry; and yet as none of them escaped due punishment, so God preserved his afflicted church, in despite of Satan, and of his blind and most wretched servants; as he shall not fail to do in this great tempest and darkness within the realm of England. And therefore yet again, beloved in the Lord, let the comfort of God's promises somewhat quicken your dull spirits; exercise yourselves now secretly, in revolving that which sometimes you have heard openly proclaimed in your ears; and be every man now a faithful preacher unto his brother. If your communication be of Christ, assuredly he will come before you are aware; his word is like unto sweet-smelling ointment, or fragrant flowers, which never can be moved or handled, but the odour goeth forth to the comfort of those that stand by; which is not so pleasant if the ointment remain within the box, and the flowers stand or lie without touching or motion.

Mark well, dear brethren, before Christ spake, his disciples judged him to have been some wicked spirit, which was to them no delightful savour; but when he spoke, the

sweet sound of his voice pierced their hearts. For what comfort was in the hearts of his disciples, when they heard these words, "Be of good comfort, it is I;" that is, Judge not that I am a spirit come to your destruction; no, I am come even for your deliverance. It is I, your Master; yea, your Master most familiar: it is I, whose voice and doctrine you know, for ye are my sheep: it is I, whose works you have seen, although ye considered not the same perfectly: it is I, who commanded you to enter upon this journey, and therefore am I come to you now in the hour of your trouble; and therefore, be not afraid, this storm shall cease, and you shall be delivered.

Neither the tongue nor pen of man can express what comfort was in the hearts of the disciples, hearing Christ's voice, and knowing him by the same; but only such can witness and declare it as feel at last the consolation of the Holy Ghost after long conflict and strife, which is betwixt the flesh and the spirit in the time of extreme troubles, when Christ appears to be absent.

And Peter gives some external sign of what Christ's word wrought inwardly in his heart; for immediately after he heard his Master's voice, he said, "Lord, if it be thou, command me to come unto thee upon the waters." Here it may be seen what Christ's voice had wrought in Peter's heart; truly not only a forgetting and contempt of the great tempest, but also such boldness and love that he could fear no danger following; but assuredly did believe that his Master Christ's puissance, power, and might was such, that nothing might resist his word and commandment. And therefore he saith, "Command me to come;" as though he should say, I desire no more than the assurance of thy commandment. If thou wilt command, I am determined to obey; for assuredly I know, that the waters cannot prevail against me, if thou speak the word: so that whatsoever is possible unto thee, by thy will and word may be possible unto me.

Thus Christ, to instruct Peter further, and us by his example, condescended to his petition, and commanded him to come; and Peter, quickly leaving the ship, came down from it, and walked upon the waters to come to Christ. Thus far of Peter's act, in which lies great abundance of doctrine; but I will pass over all that especially appertains not to the quality* of this time within the realm of England.

* Circumstances.

It was before said, well beloved brethren, That sometimes the messengers of life are judged to be the very messengers of death: and that not only with the reprobate, but also with God's elect; as was Moses with the Israelites, Jeremiah with the city of Jerusalem, and Christ himself with his apostles. But that is not a permanent sin, which abideth for ever with God's elect; but it vanishes away in such sort, that not only they know the voice of their pastor, but also they earnestly study to obey and follow it, to the danger of their own lives: for this is the special difference betwixt the children of God and the reprobate.

The one obey God speaking by his messengers, whom they embrace with unfeigned love; and that they do, sometimes not only against all worldly appearance, but also against civil statutes and ordinances of men; and therefore in their greatest extremity they receive comfort beyond expectation.

The other always resist God's messengers, and hate his word; and therefore, in their great adversity, God either takes from them the presence of his word, or else they fall into such deadly despair, that although God's messengers are sent unto them, yet neither can they receive comfort by God's promises, nor follow the counsel of God's true messengers, be it ever so perfect and fruitful. Hereof have we many evident testimonies in the scriptures of God.

Of Saul it is plain, that God so left him, that he would neither give him answer by prophets, dreams, or visions.

To Ahaz king of Judah, in the great anguish and fear which he had conceived from the multitude of those that were combined against him, Isaiah the prophet was sent, to assure him by God's promise, that his enemies should not prevail against him. And to confirm him in the same, the prophet required him to desire a sign of God, either from the heaven, or beneath in the deep; but such was the deadly despair of him, who always had despised God's prophets, and had most abominably defiled himself with idolatry, that no consolation could enter into his heart, but desperately, and with a dissembling and feigned excuse, he refused all the offers of God.

And albeit God relieved this hypocrite for that time, which was not done for his cause, but for the safety of the

afflicted church, yet he afterwards escaped not the vengeance of God.

The like we read of Zedekiah, the wretched and last king of Judah before the destruction of the city of Jerusalem; who, in his great fear and extreme anguish, sent for Jeremiah the prophet, and secretly demanded of him how he might escape the great danger that appeared when the Chaldeans besieged the city. And the prophet boldly spake, and commanded the king, if he would save his life and the city, to render and give up himself into the hands of the king of Babylon. But the miserable king had no grace to follow the prophet's counsel, because he never delighted in the prophet's doctrine, neither yet had showed any friendly favour unto him. But even as the enemies of God, the chief priests and false prophets, required of the king, so was the good prophet ill used; sometimes cast into prison, and sometimes judged and condemned to die. The most evident testimony of the wilful blinding of wicked idolaters, is written and recited in the same prophet Jeremiah, as follows.

After that the city of Jerusalem was burnt and destroyed, the king led away prisoner, his sons and chief nobles slain, and the whole vengeance of God poured out upon the disobedient; yet there was left a remnant in the land, to make use of and possess the same, who called upon the prophet Jeremiah, to know the will and pleasure of God concerning them; whether they should remain still in the land of Judah, as was appointed and permitted by the Chaldeans, or if they should depart, and flee into Egypt. To certify them of this their duty, they desire the prophet to pray unto God for them, who, condescending and granting their petition, promised to keep back nothing from them which the Lord God should open unto him. And they, in like manner taking God to record and witness, made a solemn vow to obey whatsoever the Lord should answer unto him. But when the prophet by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and assured revelation and knowledge of his will, commanded them to "remain still in the land" they were in, promising them if they would so do, That "God would there plant them;" that he would repent of all the plagues that he had brought upon them; and that he would be with them, to deliver them from the hands of the king of Babylon: but, contrariwise, "if they would not obey the voice of the Lord," but

would, against his commandment, go to Egypt, thinking that there they should live in rest and abundance, without any fear of war, or want of victuals; then the very plagues which they feared should come upon them, and take them. For, saith the prophet, it shall come to pass, that all men that obstinately will go to Egypt, there to remain, shall die either by sword, hunger, or pestilence;—when the prophet of God had declared unto them this plain sentence and will of God, I pray you, what was their answer? The text declares it, saying, "Thou speakest a lie, neither hath the Lord our God sent thee unto us, commanding that we should not go into Egypt; but Baruch the son of Neriah provoketh thee against us, that he may give us into the power of the Chaldees, that they might kill us, and lead us prisoners into Babylon." And thus they refused the counsel of God, and followed their own fancies.

Here may be espied in this people great obstinacy and blindness; for nothing which the Lord had before spoken by the prophet Jeremiah had fallen in vain; their own eyes had seen the plagues and miseries which he had threatened, take effect in every point as he had spoken before. Yea, they were yet fresh both in mind and presence, for the flame and fire wherewith Jerusalem was consumed were then scarcely quenched; and yet would they not believe his threatenings then spoken, neither would they follow his fruitful counsel, given for their great wealth and safeguard. And why so? Because they never delighted in God's truth, neither had they repented of their former idolatry, but still continued and rejoiced in the same, as manifestly appears in the forty-fourth chapter of the same prophet; and therefore would they and their wives have been in Egypt, where all kinds of idolatry and superstition abounded, that they, without reproach or rebuke, might have their fill thereof, in despite of God's holy laws and prophets.

In writing hereof it came to my mind, that after the death of that innocent and most godly king, Edward VI., while that great tumult was in England for the establishing of that most unhappy and wicked woman's authority, I mean of Mary, who now reigns in God's wrath, in treating the same argument in a town in Buckinghamshire,* named

* While Knox itinerated through Buckinghamshire, he was attended by large audiences which his popularity and the alarming crisis drew together; especially at Amersham, a place formerly

Amersham, before a great congregation, with sorrowful heart and weeping eyes, I fell into this exclamation :—

" O England ! now is God's wrath kindled against thee, now hath he begun to punish, as he hath threatened a long while, by his true prophets and messengers ; he hath taken from thee the crown of thy glory, and hath left thee without honour, as a body without a head ; and this appears to be only the beginning of sorrows, which appear to increase ; for I perceive, that the heart, the tongue, and hand of one Englishman is bent against another, and division to be in the whole realm, which is an assured sign of desolation to come. O England, England ! dost thou not consider, that the commonwealth is like a ship sailing on the sea ; if thy mariners and governors shall consume one another, shalt thou not suffer shipwreck in a short process of time? O England, England ! alas ! these plagues are poured upon thee, for that thou wouldst not know the most happy time of thy gentle visitation. But wilt thou yet obey the voice of thy God, and submit thyself to his holy words? Truly, if thou wilt, thou shalt find mercy in his sight, and the state of thy commonwealth shall be preserved.

" But, O England, England ! if thou obstinately wilt return into Egypt ; that is, if thou contract marriage, confederacy, or league with such princes as maintain and advance idolatry, such as the emperor, who is no less an enemy unto Christ than ever was Nero*—if for the pleasure and friendship, I say, of such princes, thou returnest to thine old abominations, formerly used under the papistry, then assuredly, O England ! thou shalt be plagued and brought to desolation, by means of those whose favours thou seekest, and by whom thou art procured to fall from Christ, and to serve antichrist."

This, and much more, in the dolour of my heart, that day, in the audience of such as yet may bear record, through God's permission, I then pronounced. The thing

noted for the general reception of the doctrines of Wickliff.—*M'Crie.* At Amersham, in 1506, the papists compelled the daughter of William Tylsworth to set fire to the fagots by which her father was burned.

* Luther, writing of the emperor Charles V. in a letter to Bugenhagius and others of his associates, in 1540, said, "The emperor was, is, and will continue to be, a servant of the servants of satan. I would hope that he serves being subject to vanity, not willingly, or in ignorance. We pray against him and for him, and we believe that we shall be heard."—*Ep. a de Wette,* 1920.

which I then most feared, and which also my tongue spake, that is, the subversion of the true religion, and bringing in of strangers to reign over that realm, I see come to pass this day in men's counsels and determinations; which if they proceed and take effect, as by men is concluded, then so assuredly as my God liveth, and as those Israelites that obstinately returned into Egypt again were plagued to the death, so shall England taste what the Lord hath threatened by his prophets before. God grant us true and unfeigned repentance of our former offences....

But to return to our matter. Of the premises it is plain, That such as contemn God's eternal verity and grace, can neither in their troubles receive comfort by God's messengers; neither yet can they follow the counsel of God, be it ever so profitable. But God gives them over, and suffers them to wander in their own vanities, to their own perdition: whereas, contrariwise, such as bear a reverence to God's most holy word, are drawn by the power and virtue of the same, as before is said, to believe, follow, and obey that which God commands, be it ever so hard, so unapparent, or contrary to their affections. And therefore, as God always keeps appointment with them, so are they wondrously preserved, when God's vengeance is poured forth upon the disobedient. And this is most evident in Abraham, at God's commandment, leaving his country, and going forth he knew not whither; which was a thing not so easy to be done, as it is to be spoken or read. It appears also in Abraham's believing God's promises, against all appearance; and also in offering his son Isaac, against all fatherly love and natural affection. The same is shown in Moses, Samuel, Hezekiah, Micaiah, and others of the prophets, who, at the commandment of God's word, boldly passed to the presence of tyrants, and delivered their message to them, as charge was given.

But lest some should allege, that these examples appertain not to a multitude, because they were done by individual men, I answer, We will consider what the power of God's word has wrought in many in one instance. After the Israelites had made the golden calf, and so fallen into idolatry, Moses, coming down from the mountain, and beholding their abominations, the honour that they gave to an idol, and the people spoiled of their ear-rings and jewels to their great rebuke and shame, was inflamed with such zeal, indignation and wrath, that, first he broke

the tables of the commandment; then he beat their calf to powder and gave it to them to drink, to cause them to understand that their bellies should receive that which they worshipped for God; and, finally, he commanded that every man that was of God should approach and come nigh unto him. And the sons of Levi, saith the text, came to him; to whom he said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let every man put his sword upon his thigh, and go in and out from port to port* in the tents, and let every man kill his brother, his neighbour, and every man his nigh kinsmen: and the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell the same day of the people nigh three thousand." It is evident by this history, that the power of God's word, pronounced by the mouth of a man, prevailed at one time in a great number against nature, and compelled them to be executers of God's vengeance, regarding not the affinity or nighness of blood. And also, that their doing so pleased Moses the ambassador of God, who said unto them, "Consecrate your hands this day every man in his own son, and in his own brother, that a fortunate benediction may be given to you this day." As though he should say, Your father Levi profaned and defiled his hands, killing the Shechemites in his blind rage, which moved his father Jacob, in his last testament, to condemn, execrate, and curse that his most vehement and ungodly zeal; but because in this work you have preferred God's commandment before blood, nature, and also affection, in place of that rebuke and curse, you have obtained blessing and praise.†

The like puissance and virtue of God's word working in a multitude, is to be read in the prophet Jeremiah; who, perceiving the time of God's vengeance to draw nigh, and the city of Jerusalem to be besieged, boldly cried out in his open sermon, "He that remaineth in this city shall die, either by sword, by hunger, or by pestilence. But he that shall go forth to the Chaldeans, shall live, and shall find his soul for a prey." This might have appeared a deceivable, seditious, and ungodly sermon, to command subjects to depart from the obedience and defence of their native prince, also rich citizens and valiant soldiers from their possessions and strong holds, and to desire them to

* Gate, entrance.

† The reader will recollect, that the sons of Levi became the executioners of God's vengeance by the especial command of the Most High: nothing else would have warranted their proceedings.

render themselves, without all manner of resistance, into the hands of strangers, being their enemies. What carnal man would not have judged the persuasions of the prophet most foolish and false? And yet in the hearts of such as God had elected and appointed to life, this sermon so effectually wrought, that a great number of Jerusalem left their king, their city, riches, and friends, and obeyed the prophet's counsel; for so may be espied by the answer of Zedekiah the king; when Jeremiah counselled him that he should render himself into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, he saith, "I fear these Jews that are fled to the Chaldeans, lest perchance they give me into their hands." Hereof it is plain, that many were departed from him, whom he feared more than he did his enemies.

Many more testimonies might be brought, to declare how mightily God's word, spoken by man, has wrought in the hearts of great multitudes; as in the hearts of the Ninevites, who at Jonah's preaching condemned their former religion, conversation, and life. And in the hearts of those three thousand, who at Peter's first sermon, openly made after Christ's ascension, acknowledged their offences, repented, and were soon after baptized. But these premises are sufficient to prove, as well that God's word draws his elect after it, against worldly appearance, against natural affections, and against evil statutes and constitutions; as also, that such as obey God, speaking by his ministers, never lack just reward and recompense. For only such as obeyed the voice of the prophet, found favour and grace, to the praise and glory of God's name, when his just judgments took vengeance upon the disobedient. But now briefly, by notes, we will touch the rest of Peter's act, and Christ's merciful deliverance of him; which is the end of all troubles sustained by God's elect.

And first, That Peter, seeing a mighty wind, was afraid, and so when he began to sink, he cried, "Lord, save me," three things are principally to be noted.

1. From whence cometh this fear of God's elect?

2. What is the cause that they faint and fall in adversity?

3. What remains with them in the time of this fear and down-sinking?

1. It is plain, that so long as Peter had his eyes fixed upon Christ, and attended upon nothing but the voice of Christ,

he was bold and without fear; but when he saw a mighty wind, not that the wind was visible, but the vehement storm and waves of the sea that were stirred up and carried by the wind were seen, then he began to fear, and to reason, no doubt, in his heart, that it had been better for him to have remained in his ship, for so Christ might have come to him; but now the storm and rage of wind were so vehement, that he could never come to Christ, and so he greatly feared. Whereof it is plain, that the only cause of our fear who have left our ship, and through the storms of the sea would go to Christ with Peter, is, that we more consider the dangers and hinderances that are in our journey, than we do the almighty power of Him who has commanded us to come to himself. And this is a sin common to all the elect and chosen children of God, that whensoever they see a vehement trouble appearing to stop them, and drive them back from the obedience of God, then they begin to fear and doubt God's power and good will.

With this fear Abraham was struck when he denied his wife. This storm Moses saw when he refused to be God's messenger. And Hezekiah's sore complaint declares, that he more believed, considered, and looked upon the proud voice, and great power of Sennacherib, than he did upon the promises of the prophet.

This I note for this purpose, That albeit this late and most raging storm within the realm of England, has taken from you the presence of Christ for a time, so that you have doubted whether it was Christ whom you saw before, or not; and albeit the vehemency of this contrary wind that would drive you from Christ, has so employed your ears that you have almost forgotten what He was who commanded you to come to himself, when he cried, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I shall refresh you;" "Pass from Babylon, O my people," &c. Albeit, I say, this raging tempest has struck such fear in your hearts that almost all is forgotten: yet, dear brethren, despair not, such offences have happened to God's elect before you. If you will not continue obstinate, you shall still find mercy and grace. It had been your duty indeed, and agreeable to your profession, to have looked to Christ alone, and to have contemned all impediments; but such perfection is not always with man, but happy is he that feels himself to sink.

2. The cause why God's elect begin to faint and sink

down in the time of great adversity, is fear and unbelief, as appears in Peter, for so long as he neither feared danger, nor mistrusted Christ's word, so long the waves, contrary to their nature, obeyed and served his feet, as if they had been the dry, solid, and sure ground. But as soon as he began to despair and fear, so soon he began to sink. Let this instruct us, that lively faith makes man bold, and is able to carry us through such perils as are impossible to nature; but when faith begins to faint, then man begins to sink down in every danger; as in the histories before rehearsed it may appear, and in the prophets it is plain. For Elijah, at God's commandment, passing into the presence of king Ahab, in the fervency of his faith, obtained the fire to come from heaven, and to consume his sacrifice by which also he was made so bold, that in the presence of the king he feared not to kill his false prophets. But the same Elijah, hearing of the managing and threatenings of cursed Jezebel, and considering that the wrath of a wicked woman could, by no reasonable means, be appeased, saw a storm, and feared the same, and so he prepared to flee; which he did not without some sinking down; for he began to reason and dispute with God, which never can be done by the creature without foolishness and offence. The same we find in Jeremiah, and many more.

But the question may be asked, "Seeing Christ knew before what should happen to Peter, why did he not hinder him from coming from his boat? or else, Why did he not so confirm him in faith, that he should not have doubted?"

To which may be answered, Albeit we could render no reason of this work of Christ's, yet were the work itself a sufficient reason; and it were enough to answer, That so it pleased Him, who is not bound to render a reason for all his works. But yet, if we shall mark with diligence to what office Peter was to be called, and what offences long rested with him, we shall find most just and necessary causes of this work of Christ, and down-sinking of Peter. It is plain that Peter had many notable virtues, as a zeal and fervency towards Christ's glory, and a readiness and forwardness to obey his commandments; but it is likewise plain, that of long continuance there rested with Peter a desire of honour and worldly rest, and that moved him to persuade Christ that he should not die. There rested with him pride, presumption, and a trust in himself; unless this

presumption and vain trust in his own strength had been corrected, he had never been fit to have fed Christ's flock: and such sins can never be fully corrected or reformed, till they be felt, known, and confessed. Doubtless, so arrogant is our nature, that it neither will know nor confess the infirmity of itself, until such time as it has a trial by manifest experience. This is most plain by Peter, long after this tempest; for when Christ said to his disciples, "This night shall ye all be offended in me;" Peter boldly bragged, and said, "Albeit that all should be offended, and should flee from thee, yet shall not I be offended; but I am ready to go to prison, and to die with thee." This was a bold presumption, and an arrogant promise, spoken in contempt of all his brethren, from which he could not be reduced by Christ's admonition; but the more that Christ showed him that he should deny him, the more bold was he to affirm the contrary; as though his Master, Christ, the author of all truth, yea, rather Truth itself, could make a lie. Therefore it was of necessity that he should prove in experience, what was the frailty of man's nature, and what was the imbecility and weakness of faith, even in those that were his chief apostles, who had continually heard his heavenly doctrine, seen daily his wonderful miracles, who had got so many admonitions from him, and who also had followed and obeyed him in many things. If Peter had not proved and felt that imbecility and weakness of faith in himself, neither could he rightly have praised God's infinite goodness, and embraced his free mercy, neither had he been apt and suitable to have been a pastor to the weak sheep and tender lambs of Christ; but he would have been as proud a contemner and despiser of his weak brethren, as the arrogant papists, who contemn and despise all godly and learned men, though they are a thousand times more excellent than themselves.

But to correct and inform both presumptuous arrogance, and frail imbecility and weakness of faith, Peter was permitted once to sink, and thrice most shamefully to refuse and deny his Master; to the intent that, by the knowledge of his own weakness, he might be the more able to instruct others of the same; and also, that he might more largely magnify God's free grace and mighty deliverance. This Christ taught him before his falling, saying, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren:" as though Christ

should have said, Peter, thou art yet too proud to be a pastor, thou canst not stoop nor bow thy back down to take up the weak sheep, thou dost not yet know thine own infirmity and weakness, and therefore thou canst do nothing but despise the weak ones; but when thou shalt be instructed by experience of thine own self what hid iniquity lurks within the nature of man, then shalt thou learn to be humble, and stoop among other sinners; and also thou shalt be an example to others who afterwards shall offend as thou didst; so that, if they repent as thou didst, they need not despair of mercy, but may trust most assuredly in Christ to obtain grace, mercy, and forgiveness of sins, as thou didst.

This fruit have we to gather, dear brethren, from Peter's down-sinking in the sea, which was a private admonition, that he afterwards would deny his master Christ,—that we are assured by the voice of Christ, if in the time of trouble and extreme danger we cry with Peter we shall be delivered as he was; and if we mourn for our denial of Christ, as he did, we shall find the same grace and favour at Christ's hand that he found.

3. But now let us touch the third note, which is this; That with God's elect in their greatest fear and danger there resteth some small spark of faith, which, by one means or other, declares itself, albeit the afflicted person in fear or danger, doth not speedily perceive the same. As here, in Peter, is most clear and manifest; for perceiving himself to sink down, he cried, "Lord, save me;" which words were a declaration of a lively and quick faith, which lay hid within his afflicted and sorely perplexed heart, whose nature is (I mean of faith) to hope against hope; that is, to look for help and deliverance against all appearance or likelihood, as the words of Peter witness that he did. He saw nothing but the raging sea ready to swallow him up; he felt nothing but himself sinking down in body, and sorely troubled in heart; and yet he cried, "Lord, save me;" which words first declare, that he knew the power of Christ was able to deliver him; for it had been foolishness to have called for the help of him whom he had known to be impotent and unable to help.

The calling for Christ's help by prayer, in this extreme danger, declared also that Peter had some hope, through his gracious goodness, to obtain deliverance: for, in

extreme perils, it is impossible that the heart of man can cry for God's help without some hope of his mercy.

It is also to be noted, That, in his great danger, Peter murmurs not against Christ; neither does he impute or lay any crime or blame upon Christ, albeit at his commandment he had left his boat. He saith not, "Why lettest thou me sink, seeing that I have obeyed thy commandment?" Moreover, Peter asks help of Christ alone, who, he was persuaded, both could and would help at a pinch. He cried not upon Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David; neither upon any other of the patriarchs, prophets, or saints departed; neither yet upon his own fellows in the boat, but UPON CHRIST, at whose commandment he had left the boat.

All these things together considered, declare that Peter, in this his extreme fear and danger, had yet some spark of faith, albeit in that present jeopardy he had neither consolation nor comfort; for these premises are undoubted tokens that he had faith. But now to the end, which is this:

"And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased; and they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

Hereof first is to be noted, That God is always nigh to those that call upon him faithfully; and so willing is he to deliver them, that neither fear nor extreme danger can hinder his almighty hand. Peter was sinking down, and looked for nothing but present death, and yet the hand of Christ prevented him. That which was visibly and openly done to Peter in that his great peril, is invisibly and secretly done to Christ's holy Church, and to the chosen members of Christ's mystical body, in all ages.

How nigh and ready was the hand of God to deliver his people Israel, when they were almost overwhelmed with despair, in the days of Moses and Esther! How nigh was God to Daniel amongst the lions, to Jonah in the whale's belly, to Peter in the prison, is likewise most evidently declared in the Holy Scriptures! How suddenly, and beyond all expectation, was David many times delivered from Saul's tyranny, his own heart confessed, and

compelled his pen to write, and tongue to sing, saying, "He sent from above, and hath delivered me; he hath drawn me forth of many waters!"

Open your ears, dear brethren, and let your hearts understand, that as our God is unchangeable, so his gracious hand is not shortened this day. Our fear and trouble is great, the storm that bloweth against us is sore and vehement, and we appear to be drowned in the deep: but if we unfeignedly know the danger, and will call for deliverance, the Lord's hand is nigher than the sword of our enemies.

The sharp rebuke that Christ Jesus gave to Peter, teaches us, that God does not flatter nor conceal the faults of his elect; but makes them manifest, to the end that the offenders may repent, and that others may avoid the like offences.

That Christ called Peter "of little faith," argues and declares, (as we before have noted,) that Peter was not altogether faithless, but that he fainted, or was uncertain in his faith. For so soundeth the Greek term; whereby we ought to be admonished, that, in passing to Christ through the storms of this world, is not only required a fervent faith in the beginning, but also a constancy to the end, as Christ saith, "He that continueth to the end shall be saved;" and St. Paul, "Unless a man shall strive lawfully, he shall not be crowned." The remembrance of this ought to put us in mind, that the most fervent man, and such as has long continued in the profession of Christ, is not yet sure to stand at all hours, but that he is subject to many dangers, and that he ought to fear his own frailty; as the apostle teaches us, saying, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." For if Peter, who began so fervently, yet fainted ere he came to Christ, what ought we to fear, in whom such fervency was never found? No doubt we ought to tremble and fear the worst, and by the knowledge of our own weakness, incessantly to pray with the apostles, "O Lord! increase our faith." Christ's demand and question, asking Peter, "Why doubtest thou?" contains in itself a vehemency, as if he should have said, Doubtest thou of my power, or of my promises, or of my good will? If my power had not been sufficient to have saved thee, then I could neither have come to thee through the stormy sea, neither have made the waters obey thee, when thou didst begin to come to

me. And if my good will had not been to have delivered thee and thy brethren, then I had not appeared unto thee, neither had I called upon thee, but had permitted the tempest to devour and swallow thee up: but considering that thine eye saw me present, thine ears heard my voice, and thou, Peter, especially knewest the same, and obeyedst my commandment, why, then, doubtest thou? Beloved brethren, if this same demand and question were laid to our charge, we should have less pretence of excuse than Peter had; for he might have alleged, That he was not advertised that any great storm should have risen betwixt him and Christ, which we cannot justly allege; for since the time that Christ has appeared unto us by the brightness of his word, and called upon us by his lively voice, he has continually blown in our ears, that persecution and trouble should follow the word that we professed; which days are now present. "Alas! then, why doubt we through this storm to go to Christ? Support, O Lord! and let us sink no further."

Albeit that Peter fainted in faith, and therefore was worthy most sharply to be rebuked, yet Christ did not leave him in the sea, neither long permitted he that fear and tempest to continue. But first they both entered into the ship, and thereafter the wind ceased; and lastly, their ship arrived, without longer delay, at the place for which they long had laboured.

O blessed and happy are those who patiently abide this deliverance of the Lord! The raging sea shall not devour them; albeit they have fainted, yet shall not Christ Jesus leave them behind in the stormy sea, but he shall suddenly stretch forth his mighty hand, and shall place them in the ship amongst their brethren. That is, he shall conduct them to the number of his elect and afflicted church, with whom he will continue to the end of the world.

The majesty of his presence shall put to silence this boisterous wind, the malice and envy of the devil, which so bloweth in the hearts of princes, prelates, kings, and earthly men, that they are altogether combined against the Lord, and against his anointed, Christ; in despite of whom, he shall safely conduct, convey, and carry his sorely troubled flock to the life and rest for which they travel.

Albeit, I say, that sometimes they have fainted in their journey—albeit that weakness in faith permitted them to sink, yet from the hand of Christ they cannot be rent; he

may not suffer them to drown, nor the deep to devour them; but for the glory of his own name he must deliver, for they are committed to his charge, protection, and keeping; and therefore must he keep and defend such as he hath received of his Father, from sin, from death, from the devil and hell.

The remembrance of these promises is to mine own heart such occasion of comfort, as neither any tongue or pen can express; but yet, peradventure, there are some of God's elect who cannot be comforted in this tempest, by any meditations of God's election or defence; but rather beholding such as have sometimes boldly professed Christ's verity, to be now returned to their accustomed abominations; and also, themselves to be overcome with fear, against their knowledge and conscience, they stoop to an idol,* and with their presence maintain the same. And being at this point, they begin to reason, whether it be possible that the members of Christ's body may be permitted so horribly to fall to the denial of their Head, and in the same to remain for long continuance; and from this reasoning they enter into dolour, and from dolour they begin to sink to the gates of hell and ports of despair.

The dolour and fear of such I grant to be most just; for, oh! how fearful is it, for the love of this transitory life, in the presence of man, to deny Christ Jesus, and his known and undoubted verity!

But yet to such as are not obstinate contemners of God, and of all godliness, I would give this my weak counsel, That they should rather appeal to mercy, than, by the severe judgments of God, pronounce against themselves the fearful sentence of condemnation; and consider that God includes all under unbelief, that he may have mercy upon all; that the Lord killeth, and giveth life; he leadeth down to hell, and yet lifteth up again.

But I will not that any man think, that by this, my counsel, I either justify such as are horribly returned back to their vomit, either yet that I flatter such as maintain that abominable idol with their daily presence. God forbid; for then I were but a blind guide, leading the blind headlong to perdition; only God knoweth the dolour and sobs of my heart, for such as I hear daily to turn back. But the cause of my counsel is, that I know the conscience

* The Romish mass.

of some to be so tender, that whensoever they feel themselves troubled with fear, wounded with anguish, or to have slidden back in any point, then they judge their faith to be quenched, and themselves to be unworthy of God's mercies for ever. To such I direct my counsel, to those I mean that rather offend by weakness and infirmity than of malice and set purpose. And I would that such should understand and consider, that all Christ's apostles fled from him, and denied him in their hearts. And also I would they should consider, that no man from the beginning stood in greater fear, greater danger, or greater doubt, than Peter did when Christ's presence was taken from him; yea, no man felt less comfort, or saw less appearance of deliverance; and yet neither were the disciples rejected for ever, neither was Peter permitted to drown in that deep.

But some will object, Faith was not utterly quenched in them; and therefore they got deliverance, and were restored to comfort.

Answer. I would that the afflicted and troubled consciences in this age would consider, that neither fear, nor danger, nor yet doubting, nor backsliding, can utterly destroy and quench the faith of God's elect, but that always there remains with them some root and spark of faith, howbeit in their anguish they neither feel nor can discern the same. Yet some may demand, How shall it be known in whom the spark and root of faith remains, and in whom not; seeing that all flee from Christ, and bow down to idolatry? Hard it is, and in a manner impossible, that one man should wittingly judge of another, for that Elijah could not do of the Israelites in his days, but every man may easily judge of himself. For the root of faith is of that nature, that it will not be long idle, but of necessity, in process of time, it will send forth some branches that may be seen and felt by the outward man, if it remain lively in the heart; as you heard it did in Peter, compelling him to cry unto Christ, when he was in the greatest necessity. Wilt thou have a trial whether the root of faith remaineth with thee or not?—I speak to such as are weak, and not to proud contemners of God—

1. Feelest thou thy soul fainting in faith, as Peter felt his body sink down in the waters?

2. Art thou as sorely afraid that thy soul should drown

in hell, if thou consentest to, or obeyest idolatry, as Peter was that his body should drown in the waters?

3. Desirest thou as earnestly the deliverance of thy soul, as Peter did the deliverance of his body?

4. Believest thou that Christ is able to deliver thy soul, and that he will do the same according to his promise?

5. Dost thou call upon him without hypocrisy, now in the day of thy trouble?

6. Dost thou thirst for his presence, and for the liberty of his word again?

7. Mournest thou for the great abominations that now overflow the realm of England?

If these things, I say, remain in thy heart, then art thou not altogether destitute of faith, neither shalt thou descend to perdition for ever; but mercifully shall the Lord stretch forth his mighty hand, and shall deliver thee from the very throat and bottom of hell. But by what means he shall perform that his merciful work neither appertains to thee to demand, nor to me to define; but this is requisite, and is our bounden duty, that such means as the hand of our God shall offer, to avoid idolatry, we refuse not, but that willingly we embrace the same, albeit it partly disagree to our affections. Neither yet, think I, that suddenly, and by one means, shall all the faithful in England be delivered from idolatry; no, it may be that God will so strengthen the hearts of some of those that have fainted before, that they will resist idolatry to the death;* and that were a glorious and triumphant deliverance. God may so touch the hearts of others, that they will rather choose to walk and go as pilgrims, from realm to realm, suffering hunger, cold, heat, thirst, weariness, and poverty, than that they will abide (having all abundance) in subjection to idolatry; to some God may offer such occasion, that in despite of idolaters, be they princes or prelates, they may remain within their own dominions, and yet neither bow their knees to Baal, nor yet lack the lively food of God's most holy word.

If God offer unto us any such means, let us assuredly know, that Christ Jesus stretches forth his hand unto us, willing to deliver us from that danger wherein many are like to perish; and therefore let us not refuse it, but with

* This shortly after came to pass, when so many endured martyrdom for Christ's sake, amongst whom were several who had "fainted before."

gladness let us take hold of it, knowing that God has a thousand means, very unlikely to man's judgment, whereby he will deliver, support, and comfort his afflicted church. And therefore, most dearly beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ, considering that the remembrance of Christ's banquet, whereof I doubt not some of you have tasted with comfort and joy, is not yet utterly taken from your mind, and that we have entered upon this journey at Christ's commandment—considering that we find the sea-winds blow contrary and against us, as before was prophesied unto us, and that we see the same tempest rage against us, that ever has raged against Christ's elect church; and considering also that we feel ourselves ready to faint, and likely to be oppressed by these stormy seas—let us prostrate ourselves before the throne of grace, in the presence of our heavenly Father, and in the bitterness of our hearts let us confess our offences, and for Christ Jesus' sake let us ask deliverance and mercy, saying, with sobs and groanings from our troubled hearts,

THIS COMPLAINT.

O God! the heathen are entered into thine inheritance, they have defiled thy holy temple, and have profaned thy blessed ordinance. In place of thy joyful signs, they have erected their abominable idolatry; the deadly cup of all blasphemy is restored again to their harlot's hand;* thy prophets are persecuted, and none are permitted to speak thy word freely: the poor sheep of thy pasture are commanded to drink the venomous waters of men's traditions. But, O Lord! thou knowest how sorely they grieve us; but such is the tyranny of these most cruel men, that plainly they say, "They shall root us out at once, so that no remembrance shall remain of us on earth."

O Lord! thou knowest that we are but flesh, and that we have no power of ourselves to withstand their tyranny; and therefore, O Father! open the eyes of thy mercy upon us, and confirm thou in us the work which thine own mercy has begun. We acknowledge and confess, O Lord! that we are punished most justly, because we lightly regarded the time of our merciful visitation. Thy blessed gospel was, in our ears, like a lover's song,† pleasing us for a time, but, alas! our lives did not agree with thy

* Rev. xvii. 4. xviii. 3. † Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

statutes and holy commandments; and thus we acknowledge that our iniquity has compelled thy justice to take the light of thy word from the whole realm of England. But be thou mindful, O Lord! that it is thy truth which we have professed, and that thy enemies blaspheme thy holy name, and our profession, without cause: thy holy gospel is called heresy, and we are accused as traitors, for professing the same. Be merciful, therefore, O Lord! and be salvation unto us in this time of our anguish; albeit our sins accuse and condemn us yet do thou according to thine own name. We have offended against thee; our sins and iniquities are without number; and yet art thou in the midst of us. O Lord! albeit tyrants bear rule over our bodies, yet our souls thirst for the comfort of thy holy word.

Correct us, therefore, but not in thy hot displeasure; spare thy people, and permit not thine inheritance to be in rebuke for ever. Let such, O Lord! as now are most afflicted, yet once again praise thy holy name before thy congregation. Repress the pride of those blood-thirsty tyrants; consume them in thine anger, according to the reproach which they have laid against thy holy name. Pour forth thy vengeance upon them, and let our eyes behold the blood of thy saints required of their hands. Delay not thy vengeance, O Lord! but let death devour them in haste; let the earth swallow them up, and let them go down quick to the hells. For there is no hope of their amendment, the fear and reverence of thy holy name is quite banished from their hearts; and, therefore, yet again, O Lord! consume them in thine anger, and let them never bring their wicked counsels to effect; but, according to the godly powers, let them be taken in the snare which they have prepared for thine elect. Look upon us, O Lord! with the eyes of thy mercy, and show pity upon us, thy weak and sorely oppressed flock. Gather us yet once again to the wholesome treasures of thy most holy word, that we may openly confess thy blessed name within the realm of England. Grant this, O heavenly Father! for Christ Jesus thy Son's sake. Amen.

If on this manner, or otherwise, as God shall put in our hearts, without hypocrisy, in the presence of our God, respecting more his glory than our private welfare, we continually pour forth our complaint, confession, and

prayers; then, so assuredly as our God liveth, and as we feel these present troubles, our God himself shall rise to our defence; he shall confound the counsels of our enemies, and trouble the wits of such as most wrongfully trouble us. He shall send Jehu to execute his just judgments against idolaters, and against such as obstinately defend them. Yea, the chief men of our times shall not escape the vengeance and plagues that are prepared for their portion. The flatterers and maintainers of Jezebel's abominations shall drink the cup of God's wrath. And, in despite of the devil, the glory of Christ Jesus, and the brightness of his countenance shall yet so shine in our hearts by the presence of his grace, and before our eyes, by the true preaching of his gospel, that altogether we shall fall before him, and say, "O Lord! thou art our God, we will extol thee, and confess thy name, for thou hast brought wondrous things to pass according to thy counsels, which albeit they appear to be far off, yet they are true and most assured. Thou hast brought to ruin the places of tyrants; and therefore shall the afflicted magnify thee, and the city of tyrannical nations shall fear thee. Thou hast been, O Lord, a strong defence to the poor, a sure place of refuge to the afflicted in the time of his anguish."*

This, no doubt, dear brethren, shall one day be the song of God's elect within the realm of England, after God has poured forth his vengeance upon those disobedient and blood-thirsty tyrants, who now triumph in all abominations. Therefore yet again, beloved in the Lord, abide patiently the Lord's deliverance, avoiding and fleeing such offences as may separate and divide you from the blessed fellowship of the Lord Jesus at his second coming. Watch and pray, resist the devil, and row against this vehement tempest, and shortly shall the Lord come to the comfort of your hearts, which now are oppressed with anguish and care; but then shall you so rejoice, that through gladness you shall say, "Behold, this is our God, we have waited upon him, and he hath saved us: this is our Lord, we have long thirsted for his coming, now shall we rejoice and be glad in his salvation." Amen. The great Bishop of our souls, Jesus our Lord, so strengthen and assist your troubled hearts with the mighty comfort of the Holy

* Isaiah xxv. 1—4.

Ghost, that neither earthly tyrants, nor worldly torments, may have power to drive you from the hope and expectation of that kingdom, which for the elect was prepared from the beginning, by our heavenly Father, to whom be all praise and honour, now and ever. Amen.

Remember me, dear brethren, in your daily prayers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Yours, with sorrowful heart,

JOHN KNOX.

A

NOTABLE SERMON OR CONFESSION,

MADE

BY JOHN KNOX,

April 4, 1550.

WHEREIN IS EVIDENTLY PROVED THAT THE MASS IS, AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN, ABOMINABLE BEFORE GOD, AND TO BE IDOLATRY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE OPINION CHRISTIANS HAVE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

When Knox was released from his imprisonment on board the French gallies in 1549, he proceeded to England, and was received by the protestants with much joy. Cranmer and his associates in promoting the reformation, having stationed several pious and zealous preachers to itinerate in different parts of the kingdom, sent Knox to Berwick, where he laboured for nearly two years with much success. His preaching was very disagreeable to the clergy of that country, who were almost entirely bigoted Romanists, and were countenanced by Tonstal, bishop of Durham, a papist in his heart, and who opposed the reformation as far as he could with safety, till he was deprived of his see in 1553.

A charge was brought by these ecclesiastics against Knox for teaching that the service of the mass was idolatrous, and the Reformer was summoned to appear before the council of the North, which directed public affairs in that district. Bishop Tonstal and several of his clergy were also present, not being suffered by the protestant counsellors to proceed against Knox according to the usual practice of the church of Rome. Knox being permitted to declare his mind fully and freely, made a most able and impressive defence, which completely silenced the Romish prelate and his clergy. He was allowed to continue his labours ; in the following year he was stationed at Newcastle, and in December 1551, received a further mark of the approval of the government, being appointed one of king Edward's chaplains in ordinary.

A

SERMON OR CONFESSION,

MADE

BY JOHN KNOX,

WHEREIN HE PROVES THE MASS TO BE IDOLATRY.

The fourth of April, in the year 1550, *was appointed to John Knox, preacher of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, to give his confession why he affirmed the mass to be idolatry. On which day, in the presence of the council and congregation, amongst whom were present the bishop of Durham and his doctors, in this manner he began:—*

This day I do appear in your presence, honourable auditors, to give a reason why so constantly I do affirm the mass to be, and at all times to have been, IDOLATRY, and abomination before God. And because men of great erudition, in your hearing have affirmed the contrary, most gladly would I that they were here present, either in proper person, or by their learned men, to ponder and weigh the causes moving me thereto; for unless I evidently prove my intent by God's holy scriptures, I will recant it as wicked doctrine, and confess myself most worthy of grievous punishment.

How difficult it is to pull forth of the hearts of the people the thing wherein opinion of holiness standeth, is declared by the great tumult and uproar moved against Paul by Demetrius and his fellows, who, by idolatry, got great advantage, as our priests have done by the mass in times past. The people hearing, I say, that the honour of their great goddess, Diana, stood in jeopardy, with furious voices cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

As though they would say, We will not have the magnificence of our great goddess Diana, whom not only Asia but the whole world worships, called in doubt, or in question, or in controversy; away with all men intending that impiety. And hereunto were they moved by long custom and false opinion.

I know that in the mass there has not only been esteemed to be great holiness and honouring of God, but also the ground and foundation of our religion; so that, in the opinion of many, the mass being taken away, there remains no true worshipping or honouring of God in the earth. The deeper hath it pierced the hearts of men, that it occupies the place of the last and mystical supper of our Lord Jesus. But if I shall, by plain and evident scriptures, prove the mass, in her most honest garments, to have been idolatry before God, blasphemous to the death and passion of Christ, and contrary to the supper of Jesus Christ; then good hope have I, honourable audience and beloved brethren, that the sure love and obedience of God, who, in his scriptures, hath spoken all verity necessary for our salvation, shall move you to give place to the same. O Lord eternal! move and govern my tongue to speak the verity, and the hearts of the people to understand the same.

That you may the better perceive and understand the manner of my doctrine in this my confession; first, I will collect and gather the sum thereof in a brief and short syllogism; and hereafter explain the same more largely.

The mass is idolatry.

All worshipping, honouring, or other service invented by the brain of man in the religion of God, without his own express commandment, is idolatry.

The mass is invented by the brain of man, without any commandment of God.

Therefore it is idolatry.

To prove the first part, I will adduce none of the Gentiles' sacrifices, in which, notwithstanding, there was less abomination than has been in the mass. But from God's scriptures will I bring the witnesses of my words. And, first, let us hear Samuel speaking unto Saul, after he had sacrificed unto the Lord upon mount Gilgal, what time his enemies approached him. "Thou art become foolish," said Samuel, "thou hast not observed the precepts of the Lord, which he commanded thee; truly the Lord had

prepared to have established thy kingdom over Israel for ever; but now thy kingdom shall not be sure."

Let us now consider what was the offence committed by Saul. His enemies approaching, and he considering that the people declined from him, and that he had not consulted with the Lord, nor offered sacrifice for pacifying the Lord's wrath, by reason that Samuel, the principal prophet and the priest, was not present, himself offered burnt and peace offerings. Here is the ground of all his iniquity. And from this came his ejection from the kingdom, that he would honour God otherwise than was commanded by his express word. For he, being none of the tribe of Levi, appointed by God's commandment to make sacrifice, usurped the office not due to him, which was most high abomination before God, as by the punishment appears.

Consider well that no excuses are admitted by God; as that his enemies approached, and his own people departed from him: that he could not have a lawful minister, and gladly would he have been reconciled to God, and consulted with him of the end and event of that journey: and therefore he, the king, anointed by God's commandment, made sacrifice. But none of all these excuses were admitted by God, but Saul was pronounced foolish and vain; for God knows no honouring, nor will accept any, unless it have the express commandment of his own word to be done in all points. And no commandment was given to the king to make or offer unto God any manner of sacrifice; which because he took upon him to do, he and his posterity were deprived of all honours in Israel. Neither did his preeminence prevail, the necessity wherein he stood, nor yet his good intent. But let us hear further; when commandment was given unto Saul by Samuel, in God's name, to destroy Amalek, because that they troubled the people of Israel passing up from Egypt. Mark ye that, ye who now persecute the people of God—although your pains be deferred, yet are they already prepared of God. This people of Amalek were not punished immediately after the violence done against Israel, but long after, were commanded to be destroyed by Saul, man, woman, infant, suckling, oxen, cattle, camels, and asses, and, finally, all that lived in the land. Terrible should the remembrance hereof be to all such as trouble or molest such as would follow the commandment and vocation of God, leaving spiritual Egypt, the

kingdom of antichrist, and the abominations thereof. But Saul saved the king, named Agag, and permitted the people to save the best and fattest of the beasts, to the intent sacrifice should be made thereof unto God. But let us hear how this is accepted. Samuel being admonished of his disobedience, when he came unto Saul asked, "What voice it was which he heard;" the king answered, "The people have saved the fattest and best beasts, thereof to make sacrifices unto the Lord." For he spoke as though God's command appertained not unto him. Samuel answered, "Stay, and I will declare unto thee what the Lord hath spoken unto me this night." And shortly he rebuked him most sharply that he had not obeyed the voice of the Lord: but Saul, standing in opinion that he had not offended, because he did all of good intent, saith, "I have obeyed the Lord's voice, I have destroyed the sinners of Amalek, I have saved the king only; and the people have reserved certain beasts to be offered unto God." And so defended he his own work to be just and righteous. But thereto answereth Samuel, "Delighteth God in burnt-offerings, and not rather that his voice be obeyed? The sin of witchcraft is not to obey his voice, and to be stubborn is the sin of idolatry." As though Samuel would say, There is nothing that God more requires of man than obedience to his commandment; yea, he prefers obedience to the self-same sacrifice ordained by himself, and no sin is more odious in God's presence than to disobey his voice; for that God esteems so odious that he compares it to the two most abominable sins, incantation and idolatry, so that disobedience to his voice is actual idolatry.

Disobedience to God's voice is, not only when man wickedly doth contrary to the precepts of God, but also when of good zeal, or good intent, as we commonly speak, man does any thing to the honour or service of God which is not commanded by the express word of God, as in this plainly may be espied. For Saul transgressed not wickedly in murder, adultery, or like external sins, but had saved an aged and impotent king, which thing who would not call a good deed of mercy? And he had permitted the people, as is said, to save certain beasts to be offered unto the Lord; thinking that therewith God would be content and appeased, because he and the people did it of good intent. But both these Samuel called idolatry; first,

because they were done without any commandment; and, secondly, because in doing thereof he thought himself not to have offended.

And that is the chief idolatry where we defend our own inventions to be righteous in the sight of God, because we think them good, laudable, and pleasant. We may not think ourselves so free and wise that we may do unto God and unto his honour what we think expedient; no, the contrary is commanded by God, saying, " Unto my word shall ye add nothing, nothing shall ye diminish therefrom, that ye might observe the precepts of your Lord God :" which words are not to be understood of the decalogue and moral law only, but of statutes, rites, and ceremonies; for God requires equal obedience to all his laws.

Thirdly, and in witness thereof, Nadab and Abihu, offering strange fire, whereof God had given them no charge, were, instantly as they offered it, punished with death by fire. The strange fire which they offered unto God was a common fire, and not of that fire which God had commanded to burn day and night upon the altar of burnt sacrifice, which only ought to have been offered unto God. O bishops, ye should have kept up this fire. At morning and at evening ought ye to have laid fagots thereupon ; yourselves ought to have cleansed and carried away the ashes ; but God will be hallowed.

In the punishment of these two aforesaid is to be observed, that Nadab and Abihu were the principal priests next to Aaron, their father ; and that they were not found in adultery, covetousness, nor desire of worldly honour, but of a good zeal and simple intent were making sacrifice ; desiring no profit of the people thereby, but to honour God and to mitigate his wrath ; and yet in the doing of the self-same act and sacrifice they were consumed with fire. Whereof it is plain, that neither the preeminence of the person or man that makes or setteth up any religion, without the express commandment of God, nor the intent whereof he doeth the same, is accepted before God. For nothing in his religion will he admit without his own word ; but all that is added thereto he abhors, and punishes the inventors and doers thereof, as you have heard in the histories of Nadab and Abihu, also by Gideon and divers other Israelites setting up something to honour God whereof they had no express commandment.

Fourthly; I will recite a story which is related in the

pope's chronicles, which differs not from this punishment of Nadab, &c. Gregory the great, in the time of a most contagious pestilence, wherewith God punished the iniquity of Rome, for now was the wicked horn, that antichrist, sprung up and set in authority: in this time, I say, Gregory, the pope, devised a new honouring of God, the invocation of saints, called the litany:* whereof in the scriptures neither is authority nor commandment. Upon which sacrilege and idolatry God declared his wrath, even as he did upon Nadab and Abihu; for in the instant hour when first this litany was recited in open procession, as they call it, fourscore of the principal men that recited the same were horribly struck by the plague of God to death, all in one hour. The papists attribute this to the contagious air and vehemence of the plague, but it was nothing but a manifest declaration of God's wrath for inventing and bringing in unto the church a false and diabolical religion.† For while we desire saints to make intercession and to pray for us, what other thing do we than esteem the advocacy of Jesus Christ not to be sufficient for us? What can be more devilish?

From these things it is plain that no man on earth hath power or authority to determine any thing for the honour of God not commanded by his own word.

Fifthly; it profiteth nothing to say that the church has power to set up, devise, or invent honouring of God, as it thinks most expedient for the glory of God. This is the continual crying of the papists, The church, the church, hath all power; it cannot err, for Christ saith, "I will be with you to the end of the world." "Wheresoever are two or three gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Of this falsely they conclude the church may do all that seems good for the glory of God; and whatsoever the church does, that God accepts and approves.

Sixthly; I could evidently prove that which they call the church, not to be the church and immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ, which does not err; but presently I ask if the church of God be bound to this perpetual precept, "Not that thing which appears righteous in thine own

* Knox here refers to the Romish litany, which is ascribed by that church to Gregory the great, and contains many invocations to saints, as "O St. Cosmas and St. Damian, pray for us," "O St. Dominic pray for us," &c.—See the note, p. 187.

† For the particulars of the historical event here referred to, see the note, p. 187.

eyes shall you do, but what God has commanded, that observe and keep?" And if they will deny, I desire to be certified who has abrogated and made the same of none effect. In my judgment Jesus Christ confirms the same, saying, "My sheep hear my voice, and a stranger they will not hear, but flee from him." To hear his voice, which is also the voice of God the Father, is to understand and obey the same; and to fly from a stranger is to admit no other doctrine, worshipping, nor honouring of God, than has proceeded forth of his own mouth; as he himself testifies, saying, "All that are of the verity, hear my voice." And Paul saith, "The church is founded upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles;" which foundation, no doubt, is the law and the gospel. So that it may command nothing that is not contained in one of the two; for if it does so, it is removed from the only foundation, and so ceases to be the true church of Christ.

Seventhly; I would ask, if Jesus Christ be not King and Head of his church? This no man will deny. If he be the King, then must he do the office of a king; which is not only to guide, rule, and defend his subjects, but also to make and decree laws; which laws only, his subjects are bound to obey, and not the laws of any foreign princes. Then it becomes the church of Jesus Christ to mark what he speaks, to receive and embrace his laws, and where he makes end of speaking and lawgiving. So that all the power of the church is subject to God's word; and that is most evident by the commandment given of God unto Joshua his chosen captain and the leader of his people, in these words, "Be strong and valiant, that thou mayest do according to the holy law which my servant, Moses, commanded unto thee; decline not from it to the right hand nor to the left," &c. "Let not the book of the law depart from thy mouth, but meditate on it both day and night, that you may keep and do, in all things, according to that which is written therein," &c. Here Joshua was not permitted to alter one jot, ceremony, or statute in all the law of God, nor yet to add thereto, but diligently to observe that which was commanded. God requires of us no less obedience than he did of Joshua, his servant; for he will have the religion ordained by his only Son, Jesus Christ, most straitly observed, and not violated in any part.

Eighthly; I find a charge given to the congregation of Thyatira in these words; "I say unto you and unto the

rest that are in Thyatira who have not the doctrine," meaning the diabolical doctrine before rehearsed, " and who know not the deepness of satan; I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have: hold till I come." Mark well, the Spirit of God calls all which is added to Christ's religion, the doctrine of the devil, and a deep invention of the adversary satan. As also did Paul, writing to Timothy. And Jesus Christ saith, " I will lay upon you none other burden than I have already; and that which ye have, observe diligently."

O God eternal, hast thou laid none other burden upon us than Jesus Christ laid by his word? Then who hath burdened us with all these ceremonies, fasting, compelled chastity, unlawful vows, invocation of saints, and the idolatry of the mass?

The devil, the devil, brethren, invented all these burdens to depress imprudent men to perdition.

Ninth; Paul, writing of the Lord's Supper, saith, " I have received and learned of the Lord that which I have taught you." And consider if he addeth or permitteth one ceremony to be used other than Christ did use himself; but he commands them to use with reverence the Lord's institution until his returning to judgment.

Tenth; Although Moses was replenished with the spirit of wisdom, and was more familiar with God than ever was any mortal man; yet was there not of all the ceremonies reserved to his wisdom* one jot. But all was commanded to him, to be made according to the similitude shown unto him, and according as the word expressed. From which things I think it is plain, that all which is added to the religion of God, without his own express word, is idolatry.

Eleventh; Yet must I answer to one objection, made by the papists; for never will they abide to be subject unto God's word. The apostles, say they, in the council holden at Jerusalem,† set up a religion, and made laws whereof no rule was contained in God's word, therefore the church may do the same.

That there was any religion, that is honouring of God, whereby they might merit, as they call it, anything before God, invented in the council, they never are able to prove. Precepts were given, but neither such, nor to that intent that they allege, all precepts given in that

* Left for his wisdom to devise. † Acts xv.

council have the commandment of God, as afterwards shall be heard.

First, let us hear the cause of the council. Paul and Barnabas had taught amongst the Gentiles that only faith in Christ's blood justifieth; and a great multitude of Gentiles by their doctrine embraced Jesus Christ, and by him truly worshipped God. Unto Antioch from Judea came certain false teachers, affirming that unless they were circumcised according to Moses' law, they should not be saved. As our papists say at this day, that true faith in Christ's blood is not sufficient cleansing for our sins, unless also we buy their mumbled masses.* This controversy troubled the hearts and consciences of the brethren, insomuch that Paul and Barnabas were compelled to go unto Jerusalem unto Peter, James, and others, I think, of the apostles; where a convention being held, the question was proposed, Whether the Gentiles should be subject to the observation of Moses' law or not? That is, whether only faith in Jesus Christ did justify, or the observance of the ceremonial law was also necessary to justification. After great contention, Peter expounded, how that the house of Cornelius, being all Gentiles, had, by his preaching, received Jesus Christ, and were declared in his presence just and righteous before God. For they received the Holy Ghost visibly, not only without observance of Moses' law, but also before they had received any sacramental sign of Christ's religion. Peter concluded, that to put a yoke upon the brethren's necks, which yoke none of the Jews could bear themselves, was nothing but to tempt God; that is, to prove if God would be pleased with such laws and ordinances as they would lay upon the necks of men, without his own word, which were most extreme impiety. And so he concluded that the Gentiles ought not to be burdened with the law. Hereafter Paul and Barnabas declared what wondrous works God had shown by them amongst the Gentiles, who never observed Moses' law. And last, James, who appears unto me to have been principal in that council, for he collected the scriptures and pronounced sentence, as you shall hear, plainly declaring that the vocation of the Gentiles was prophesied before, and that they should be accepted and accounted the people of God without observing Moses' law; adding, that no man ought to inquire a cause of God's work; and

* Private masses.

so he pronounced the sentence, that their liberty should not be diminished.

Mark now the cause, the process, and the determination of this council. The cause was, to inquire the verity of certain doctrine, that is, Whether the Gentiles should be charged with the observation of Moses' law, as was affirmed and taught by some. In this matter they proceeded by example of God's works; finding that his gracious Majesty had accepted the Gentiles, without any thraldom or ceremony being observed. Lastly are produced scriptures, declaring so to have been before spoken; and according to all these it is concluded and designed that the Gentiles shall not be burdened with the law. What congruence, I pray you, has the antichrist's council with this council of the apostles. The apostles gathered to consult of the verity; the papistical council are gathered for private advantage, setting up of idolatry, and all abominations, as their determinations manifestly prove. The apostles proceeded in their councils, by the consideration of God's works, and applying them to the present cause, whereupon deliberation was to be taken, and determined as God's scriptures commanded. But the papists in their councils proceed according as their wisdom and foolish brains think good and expedient, and concluding not only without authority of God's scriptures, but also manifestly contrary to the same. And I offer myself most clearly to prove it, if any would allege that so it is not.

But yet, say they, the apostles commanded the Gentiles to abstain from certain things, whereof they had no commandment of God. Let us hear the things which were forbidden; "Ye shall abstain," saith the apostle sent to Antioch, "from fornication." This is the commandment of God, so, although the Gentiles esteemed it to be no sin, yet is it expressly forbidden in God's law. But then follows, "From things offered unto idols, from things strangled, and from blood, shall ye abstain." If the cause moving the apostles to forbid these things be well considered, it shall be found that they had the express commandment of Jesus Christ so to do. The Spirit of truth and knowledge working in the apostles with all abundance, showed unto them, that nothing was more profitable, and might advance the glory of God, and increase the church of Christ more than that the Jews and Gentiles should join together in familiarity and daily conversation, that by

mutual company, love might increase. One thing was easy to be perceived, that the Jews could not hastily be persuaded that the eating of meats forbidden in Moses' law was no sin before God; for it is difficult to pull forth of the heart that which is planted by God's own word; so that the Jews would have abhorred the company of the Gentiles, if they had eaten in their presence such meats as were forbidden in the law. The apostles considered that the abstaining from such things was nothing prejudicial to the liberty of christians: for with time, and as the Jews grew more strong, and were better instructed, they would not be offended for such matters; and therefore commanded they the Gentiles to abstain for a time. For that it was not a perpetual precept this day declares, when no man holdeth the eating of such things to be sin.

But what precept had they so to do? The last and new precept given by Jesus Christ to his disciples, "That every one love another, as he hath loved us." May not christian love command, that none of us do in the sight of others that which may offend or trouble the conscience of the infirm and weak? So witnesses Paul, affirming, "that if a man eat with offence, he sinneth." And by virtue of this same precept, the apostles forbid that the Gentiles shall eat things offered unto idols, &c.; that bearing some part with the infirmity of the Jews, they may grow together in mutual amity and christian love. And these are the conditions of the summons which Paul commanded to be observed. I pray you, what similitude have our papistical laws with this precept of the apostles?

But greatly it is to be marvelled that men do not mark, that the book of the Lord's law, that is of all his ordinances, testament, promises, and exhibition thereof, was sealed and confirmed in the days of the apostles, and the effect and contents thereof published; so that it is most extreme impiety to make any alteration therein; yea, and the wrath and fearful malediction of God is denounced to fall upon all them that dare attempt to add or diminish anything in his religion, confirmed and proclaimed by his own voice. O papists, where shall ye hide you from the presence of the Lord! Ye have perverted his law, ye have taken away his ordinances, ye have placed up* your own statutes instead of his! Woe and damnation abide you! Although the apostles had made laws other than the

* Substituted.

express word of commandment, what appertains that to you? Have ye the Spirit of truth and knowledge in abundance as they had? Was the Church of Christ left imperfect after the apostles' days? Bring yourselves to mind, and be ashamed of your vanity; for all men, whose eyes satan hath not blinded, may espy, that neither wisdom nor authority of man may change or set up any thing in the religion of God, without his own express commandment and word. Thus I think the first part of my argument sufficiently proved, which is, that all worshipping, honouring, or service invented by the brain of man, in the religion of God, without his own express commandment, is idolatry.

But some will think that I have taken all this labour in vain; for no man of whole judgment would have denied any part of this: nor yet does it prove anything of mine intent, for they say that the mass is not the invention of man, but the very ordinance of God. Then I descend to prove the mass to be the mere invention of man, set up without any commandment of God.

And first, respecting this manu missa which we call the mass, I would ask of such as would defend that papistical abomination, Of what spirit is it discovered that "missa"* shall signify a sacrifice for the sins of the quick and the dead? Of the Spirit of God, or of the spirit of man? Or of what original is it descended? Some will answer, from the Hebrew word, massah, which, according to some, signifies an oblation or a gift, like as tribute which the inferiors offer or pay to the superiors. In the Hebrew I confess myself ignorant, but have, as God knoweth, served Christ to have some entrance therein. So of the Hebrew diction I cannot contend, but men of great judgment in the same tongue say, that no where in the scriptures doth massah betoken an oblation; but admitting that it did so, what shall you be able to prove thereby? My question is, Whether the Spirit of God has invented and pronounced this word "missa" to signify a sacrifice for the sins of the quick and the dead? which if they be not able to prove, then must they needs confess that it is of man's invention, and not of God's imposition. I could give unto them a more apparent cause and derivation of that word, "missa," but respecting the name I am not greatly solicitous.

Secondly, I desire to be certified what they call their mass, whether the whole action, with all ceremonies, used

* The Latin name for the mass.

now, of old, or a part thereof? It will not satisfy the hearts of all godly people to say, that St. James and St. Peter celebrated the first mass in Jerusalem or Antioch. If it were so, one of the two celebrated first, and the other afterwards; but neither of the two can be proved by scripture. Great marvel it is that men shame not to lie so manifestly! Peter and James, the papists say, celebrated the first mass; but I shall prove that pope Sixtus was the first that instituted the altars. Felix, the first of that name, consecrated them and the temples both. Boniface commanded the altars to be covered with clean cloths. Gregory commanded the candles to be lighted at the gospel, and instituted certain cloths to be used. Pontianus commanded confessions to be said. And wherefore should I trouble you and myself both, in reciting what every pope added. Ye may for two-pence have the knowledge of what every pope added, until at last the whole body of the blasphemers' idol was compact and set up.* And yet they are not ashamed to say, St. Peter said the first mass, although many hundred years after him no such abominable ceremonies were invented. But they say, all these ceremonies are not of the substance of the mass, but are added for good causes. What commandment have they received to add any thing to the ordinance of God, for any cause appearing to them?

But let them certify me what is the mass? The canon,† will they answer, with the words of consecration? What is the authority of the canon?—can they precisely tell?

* Dr. Barnes, who was burned in Smithfield in 1541, wrote a tract "Of the original of the Mass, and of every part thereof," in which he stated from Romish historians, the various periods at which different parts had been added, by eleven popes and bishops of Rome, from A. D. 114 to A. D. 754. (*The works of Dr. Barnes*, p. 336.)

Fox has given a similar account: the elevation and adoration of the wafer was ordained by Honorius, A. D. 1222, and the cup taken away from the laity by the council of Constance, A. D. 1414.

Dr. Barnes's tract, and similar pieces, had been widely circulated in a cheap form, to which Knox alludes, by saying "ye may for two-pence have the knowledge." In an account given by Fox of the troubles of Gertrude Crokay, we find that Dr. Mallet, the Romish master of St. Katherine's, told her she was deceived by "little new fangled two-penny books." Two-pence, probably, was the price of many of the smaller pieces republished in the British Reformers, the originals of which are now valued at as many pounds. The circulation of religious tracts, both in Germany and England, was a great means of forwarding the Reformation.

† The ritual or service of the Romish sacrament of the altar is called the canon of the mass.

Be well prepared before you answer, lest by neglecting yourself you be proved liars. Will you say that the apostles used your canon? So you have affirmed in times past. If the canon descended from the apostles to the popes, bold and malapert* impiety it had been to have added anything thereto; for a canon is a full and sufficient rule, which in all parts and points is perfect. But I will prove divers popes to have added their portions to this holy canon. If they will deny this, examine what Sergius added, and what Leo added, and what the two Alexanders added, for I may not abide presently to recite all, but if they do not, their own law shall certify them. Secondly, the remembrance of such men, who were not born till many hundred years after the time of the apostles, declares the canon not to have been invented many years after the apostles. Who used to make mention of a man in his prayers before he be born? and much commemoration is made in the canon of men and women, of whose holiness and godly life credible histories make little mention, which is an evident testimony that your holy canon is vain and of none effect. And if any will take upon him to defend the same, I will prove that therein is an indigested, barbarous, foolish congestion† of words, imperfection of sentences, ungodly invocations, and diabolical conjurations. And this is that holy canon whose authority precelleth‡ all scriptures! O it was so holy, it might not be spoken plainly as the rest, but secretly it behoved to be whispered!§ That was not badly devised, for if all men had heard it, some would have espied the vanity thereof!

But to the words of consecration—I desire to know by whom have they that name? By Jesus Christ, they will say. But nowhere are they able to prove that the words which he pronounced in his last supper, either he or any of his apostles after him called "words of consecration." And so have they received the name by the authority of man. What are the words? Let us hear. "Take and eat ye all of this, for this is my body—in like manner he took the cup after supper, saying, &c." Let us inquire if anything be here added to Christ's words, or if anything be changed or altered therein. First, in which of the four evangelists are these words, "all of this," spoken of the

* Impudent. † Heaping together. ‡ Excels.
§ Some parts of the mass are repeated by the priest in a tone inaudible to the people.

bread: Jesus Christ spoke then of the cup, but not of the bread. O papists, ye have made alteration, not so much in words as in deed. And of the actions commanded to be used by him, they permit all to eat of the bread; but the cup ye reserved to you, ye clipped crowns and anointed upon the fingers;* and on pain of your great anathematization, of your great cursing, ye forbad that any layman should presume to drink thereof. But tell me, papists, were the apostles clipped and sinewet† as you are? Or will ye, can ye say, that the congregation of the Corinthians were papist priests? I think ye will not; and yet they all drank of the cup, like as they ate of the bread. Mark, brethren, that of Christ's own words they make alteration.

But let us proceed—they say, "Hoc est enim corpus meum," (for this is my body,) I pray them where found they "enim?"‡ Is not this their own invention, and added of their own brain? Oh here they make a great matter, and here lies a secret mystery and hidden operation; for in five words the virgin Mary conceived, say they, when she conceived the Son of God. What if she had spoken seventeen or twenty words, or what if she had not spoken three, should thereby the determinate counsel have been impeded? But, O papists, is God a juggler? Uses he a certain number of words in performing his intent? But whereto are ye ascended, to be exalted in knowledge and wisdom above Jesus Christ? He saith only, "Hoc est corpus meum." But ye, as though there lacked something necessarily requisite, have added, "enim," saying, "Hoc est enim corpus meum," so that your affirmation makes all perfect!

Consider, I exhort you, beloved brethren, if they have not added here, of their own invention, to Christ's words. And as they add, so steal they from them. Christ saith, "This is my body, which is given for you, or broken for you." These last words, wherein stand our whole comfort, they omit and make no mention of them. And what can be judged more bold or wicked than to alter Christ's words, to add unto them, and to diminish from them? Had it not been convenient, after they had introduced

* The Romish Priests.

† Probably meaning, trimmed, lusty.

‡ "For." The distinction which Knox makes here, is, however, hardly to be considered of moment.

Jesus Christ speaking, that his own words had been recited, nothing interchanged, added, nor diminished; which, seeing they have not done, but have done the express contrary, as before is proved, I think it is in vain further to labour to prove the rest of this abominable action to be invented and devised by the foolish brain of man, and so can it not be denied to be idolatry.

It shall not profit them to say, The epistle and gospel are in the mass, whereunto is nothing added; what shall they prove thereby? For the epistle and gospel, as themselves do confess, are not of the substance of the mass. And although they were, it would not at all excuse the rest of that idolatry; for the devil may speak the words of God and his false prophets also, and yet thereby are they neither better nor more holy. The epistle and gospel are God's words I confess, but they are spoken in the mass for no edification of the people, but to be a cloak unto the body of that mischievous idolatry. All the actions are abominable, because it is the invention of man; and so a few or certain good words cannot sanctify that whole mass and body of abomination. But what if I shall admit to the papists that the whole action of the mass were the institution and very ordinance of God, and never a jot of man's invention therein. Were I to admit it to be the ordinance of God, (which it is not,) yet will I prove it to be abomination before God.

The second syllogism.

All honouring and service of God, whereunto is added a wicked opinion, is abomination.

Unto the mass is added a wicked opinion.

Therefore the mass is abomination.

The first part I think no godly man will deny; but if any would do so, I ask, What made the self-same sacrifice, instituted and ordained to be used by God's express commandment, to be odious and abominable in his sight? As it is written, "Bring unto me no more your vain sacrifices, your burnt offerings are abomination, your new moons and conventions I may not abide; your solemn feasts, I hate them from the heart." And also, "Whoso slayeth an ox, killeth a man;" that is, doth me no less dishonour than if he killed a man: "Whoso slayeth a sheep," saith he, "choketh a dog; whoso bringeth meat-offerings unto me, doth offer swine's blood." These two

beasts, the dog and swine, were abomination to be offered in sacrifice; the one for cruelty, the other for filthiness. But, O priests, your sacrifices are mixed with the blood of dogs and swine; while that on the one part, you do most cruelly persecute the preachers of Christ's word, upon the other part, you yourselves live most filthily. The prophet proceeds, "Who maketh a memorial of incense, praiseth the things that are vain." Amos says, "I hate and detest your solemn feasts, I will not accept your burnt offerings, and meat offerings are not thankful before me:" and why all this? "Because," saith the prophet Isaiah, "they have chosen these in their own ways, and their own hearts have delighted in their abominations." And plain it is, that their aforesaid sacrifices were commanded to be done by God, and were not invented, no not one jot thereof, by man's wisdom. Read the books of Moses, Exodus, and Leviticus, and you shall perceive them to be the very* commandments of God. And yet saith the prophet, "They have chosen them in their own ways;" whereby the prophet meant and understood, that they had added unto them an opinion which made them to be abominable before God.

This opinion was, as in the same prophet and divers others may be perceived, That by working of the external work, they might purchase honour of God, and make satisfaction for their sins by the same sacrifices. And that I collect from Jeremiah, saying, "Ye believe false words, which shall not profit you; for when ye have stolen, murdered, committed adultery and perjury, &c., then ye come and stand before me in this house, which hath my name given unto it; and ye say, We are delivered or absolved, although we have done all these abominations." They thought and verily believed their sins to have been remitted by virtue of their sacrifice offered. But Isaiah asketh of them, "Why spend ye silver for that which is not sure, and perform labour for that which does not satiate?" Ye do hide yourselves with lies, (but they esteemed them to have been verities,) and you make a bond or covenant with death, but it shall not stand, for when destruction cometh it shall overwhelm you. Their false prophets had taught them to cry, Peace, peace, when yet there was no peace in their consciences; for they which did eat the sin of the people, (as our priests have long done; for the

* The true.

more wicked men were, the more desire they had of the mass, thinking by virtue thereof all was cleansed,) the pestilent priests of Moses' law, as the prophets witness, caused the people to believe that by oblation of the sacrifice they were just and innocent; and durst desire for such offerings, the plagues and wrath of God to be removed. But it is answered unto them by the prophet Micah, "Shall I come into his presence with burnt offerings, and calves of a year old? Or do a thousand rams please him, or ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for expiation of mine iniquity, or the fruit of my womb a sin offering for my soul?" Here the prophet plainly witnessed that no external work, how excellent soever it be, doth cleanse or make satisfaction for sin. And so, from these things, it is plain, that a wicked opinion added to the very work, sacrifice, or ceremony commanded by God to be done and used, makes it abomination and idolatry. For idolatry is not only to worship that thing which is not God, but also to trust or lean unto that which is not God, and hath not in itself all sufficiency. And, therefore, Paul calleth covetous men idolaters, because their confidence and trust is in their riches; much more would he call him an idolater whose heart believeth remission of sins by a vain work, done by himself or by any other in his name.

But now let us hear if unto the mass be joined a wicked opinion. It plainly has been taught, by law it is decreed, and in the words of the mass it is expressed, that the mass is a sacrifice and oblation for the sins of the quick and the dead, so that remission of sins was undoubtedly believed by that same action and work then done by the priest. Sufficient it were for me, by the plain words of the aforesaid prophets, here to conclude it to be abomination; seeing they plainly show that remission of sins cometh only of the mere mercy of God, without any deserving of us, or of our works proceeding of ourselves. By Isaiah, God says, "I am he which removeth thy iniquity, and that for my own sake."

But if I will prove this aforesaid opinion which has been holden of the mass to be false, deceivable, and vain, and that it is no sacrifice for sin, shall then other customs, long process of time, or a multitude of papistical patrons, defend that it is not abomination and idolatry? And first, I ask, Who offers this sacrifice, and what is offered? The priest (say the papists) offers Jesus Christ unto the Father.

Then demand I, If a man can offer unto God a more precious thing than we offer unto God—a holy, lively, and reasonable sacrifice, which he calleth our own bodies? And Jesus Christ, having nothing more precious than himself, offered up himself. If Paul had known any other sacrifice after the death of Jesus Christ, that is, in all the time of the New Testament, more acceptable unto God than the mortification of our own bodies, would he not have advertised us thereof? If there were any other sacrifice, and he did not know thereof, then the Spirit led him not into all verity, which to say were blasphemy. If he knew it, and yet did not advertise us thereof, then did he not the office of a true preacher, and to affirm that were like impiety. If any might have offered Jesus Christ but himself only, in vain it had been for him to have suffered such cruel torment in his own person by oblation of himself. And so to affirm that mortal man may offer him who is immortal God, in my opinion is malapert* pride.

But let us hear more. Paul saith, "By one oblation hath he made perfect for ever them that are sanctified." And also, "Remission of sins once gotten, there remaineth no more sacrifice." They cannot avoid Paul's words, although they say Paul speaks of the Levitical sacrifice. No, papists, he excludes all manner of sacrifice, saying, "No more sacrifice remaineth;" and that Jesus Christ himself testified upon the cross, saying, "It is finished;" that is, whatever is required for pacifying my Father's wrath justly moved against sinners; whatever is necessary for reconciliation of mankind to the favour of my eternal Father; and whatever the sins of the whole world required, is now complete and ended, so that no further sacrifice remaineth for sin.

Hear, ye papists, two witnesses speak against you: how can you deny the opinion of your mass to be false and vain? Ye say it is a sacrifice for sin, but Jesus Christ and Paul say the death of Christ alone was sacrifice sufficient for sin, and after it remaineth none other sacrifice: speak, or else ye are like to be condemned. I know you will say it is none other sacrifice, but the selfsame, that it is iterated† and renewed. But the words of Paul bind you so strait that ye may not escape. For in his whole disputation, he not only contends that there is no other sacrifice for sin, but also that the selfsame sacrifice, once offered, is

* Impudent. † Repeated.

sufficient, and never may be offered again. For otherwise the death of Christ should be of no greater price, value, nor estimation, than the death of those beasts which were offered under the law: which are proved to be of none effect nor strength, because it behoves them to be oftentimes repeated. The apostle, by comparing Jesus Christ to the Levitical priests, and his sacrifice unto theirs, makes the matter plain, that Christ might be offered but once. First, the Levitical priests were mortal, and therefore it behoved them to have successors; but Christ is an eternal priest, and therefore is alone, and needeth no successors. Second, The Levitical priests offered the blood of beasts; but Jesus Christ offered his own body and blood. Also the Levitical priests, because of the impotence of their sacrifice, repeated the same; but the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, having in itself all perfection, needeth not to be repeated; yea, to affirm that it ought or may be repeated is extreme blasphemy; for that were to impute imperfection thereupon, contrary to the whole religion, and the plain words of Paul, saying, "Such is our High Priest, holy, just, unpolluted, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens; to whom it is not necessary every day to offer, as did those priests first offer for their own sins and then for the sins of the people, for that he hath done once when he offered himself." What words can be more plain? Here Paul showeth all causes, wherefore it needed not that Christ should be offered again; and would conclude that he may not be offered again. Yet say they, it repugneth nothing that we offer Christ, so that he offer not himself. The text saith plainly, as before is showed, that Christ only might offer himself; which sacrifice is sufficient, and never may be offered again: "For if it had behoved him to have been oftener offered than once, he should have suffered oftentimes from the beginning of the world. But once hath he appeared for the taking away of sin, offering himself;" that is of his own body, once slain, now living, and which may suffer death no more. "For by his one only sacrifice hath he made us perfect, and sanctified us for ever." Here is an answer to that objection, which some make—Men every day sin, therefore it is necessary that every day sacrifice be made for sin. Paul saith, "By one sacrifice hath he confirmed us for ever:" for otherwise his death were not the only and sufficient sacrifice for our sins, to affirm which were

blasphemy. And so there remaineth of our whole redemption nothing unto his second coming, which shall be to judgment; when we, depending on him, shall receive glory and honour; but his enemies shall be made a footstool to his feet. Not that I mean that his death ought not to be preached, and the remembrance thereof extolled and praised in the right administration of his supper; but neither of these two are sacrifice for sin. What will ye answer to this, which Paul produces against your mass? He plainly saith, There is no sacrifice for sin, but in Christ's death only; and that neither may ye offer him, nor yet may he offer himself any more. You will say, It is a memorial sacrifice, under which Jesus Christ is offered unto the presence of God the Father by the church, under the appearance of bread and wine, for remission of sins. I answer with Paul, "He appeareth now in the presence of God for us." So that it is not requisite that any man offer or represent him to the Father, for that he doth himself, making continual intercession for us.

But let us consider the doctrine more deeply. The church, say they, offered Jesus Christ unto God the Father for a memorial sacrifice, or in a memorial sacrifice. Is there any oblivion or forgetfulness befallen God the Father, and hath he forgotten the death and passion of Jesus Christ, that he need to be brought in memory thereof by mortal man? Behold, brethren, how that impiety discloses and declareth itself! Can there be any greater blasphemy than to say, God the Father hath forgotten the benefits which he gave to mankind in his only Son Jesus! And whosoever will say that they offer any memorial sacrifice or remembrance thereof unto God, doth plainly say that God hath forgotten them; for otherwise what needed a representation or remembrance? Mark, papists, and consider how satan hath blinded you; ye do manifestly lie, and do not perceive the same. Ye do blaspheme God at every word, and can ye not repent? They say it is an applicatory sacrifice, a sacrifice whereby they do and may apply the merits of Christ's passion unto sinners. They will be layers-to of plasters! but I fear the wound is not well ripened, and that therefore the plasters are unprofitable. You say you may apply the merits of Christ's passion to whom you list. This is proudly spoken. Then you may make peace with God at your pleasure. But he saith the contrary in these words, "Who may make?"

Here God saith, that there is none who may move his wrath against his chosen. And here ought ye to rejoice, brethren: neither the pope, nor his priests, nor bishops may cause God to be angry against you; although they curse you with cross, bell, and candle;* so may no man compel him to love or receive any in favour but whom it pleases his infinite goodness. Moses, I confess, prayed for the people when God was displeased with them, but he spoke not so proudly as you do, but desired God either to remit the offence of the people, or else to destroy him altogether with them. I fear that your love is not so fervent. He obtained his petition of God.

But will you say, So it was determined before in the counsels of God? advise you well. The nature of God is to be free, and enthralled unto nothing; for although he is bound and obliged to fulfil all that his word promises to the faithful believers, yet that is neither subjection nor thraldom; for freely he made his promise, and freely he fulfils the same. I desire to be certified where God made his promise unto you papist priests, that you should have power to apply, as you say, the merits of Christ's passion to all and sundry who told or numbered money to you for that purpose? Does God take any part of the profit that you reserve? Alas, I have compassion upon your vanity, but more upon the simple people, that have been deceived by you and your false doctrine. Are you better heard by God than Samuel was? He prayed for king Saul, and that most fervently, and yet obtained not his petition, nor might apply any merits or holiness unto him. And it is said to Jeremiah, "Pray ye not for this people, for my heart is not towards them; no, though Moses and Elias should pray for them, yet would I not hear them, for they love to go wrong, and do not abstain from iniquity. Although they fast and cry, yet will I not hear them; and although they offer burnt sacrifice, I take no pleasure in it. And therefore pray not for this people, nor yet make any intercession for them, for I will not hear thee."

What say ye to these words, papists? The prophet is forbidden to pray; for God saith he neither will hear him, nor yet the people: he will accept none of their sacrifices; and that because the people manifestly rebelled against God, rejoiced in iniquity, committed idolatry and abomination. And he manifestly shows, that nothing may

* The Romish form of cursing.

appease him but true repentance and conversion again unto God. O priests, hath there not as great iniquity abounded in your days as ever did from the beginning? Have not you been enticers and leaders of the people to all idolatry? Yea, have not the mischievous example of your abominable lives provoked thousands unto iniquity? And yet ye do say, that ye may apply the merits of Christ's passion to whom ye list! Hear ye not that God never will accept prayers and sacrifice, whilst true repentance was not found? of that ye were dumb and always kept silence. Your clamour and crying was, "Come, come to the mass; buy, with money, substance, and possessions, remission of your sins; we have the merits of Christ's passion; we may offer Jesus Christ unto the Father, whom he must needs receive as an acceptable sacrifice and satisfaction for all our sins." Think not, brethren, that I allege anything upon them, which they themselves do not speak, as their own law and mass shall testify.

In the beginning of the canon,* the proud priest, lifting up his eyes, as though he had God always bound to his commandment, saith, "We beseech thee, most merciful Father, by Jesus Christ our Lord, that thou receive and bless this untasted sacrifice," (unsavoury sacrifice truly he might have said,) "which we offer to thee for thy universal church." O proud and perverse prelates and priests, who gave you that authority? Is it not expressly forbidden by the apostle Paul that any man should usurp the honour to make sacrifice, except he be called by God as was Aaron? Have ye the same commandment which was given unto Aaron? His sacrifices are abridged† by Christ. Let us hear where ye are commanded to make sacrifice? Search the scriptures, but search them with judgment. It will not be, "Hoc facite,"‡ for that is spoken of eating, drinking, and thanksgiving, and not of sacrifice making. Advise with others that have more appearance to prove your intent; for if this be well pondered, the weight of them will depress the proudness of your papistical priesthood.

Now will I collect shortly, all that is said to prove that the mass is no sacrifice for sin. Mark: the new testament is eternal, that is, being once made, it can never be dissolved, and therefore the blood wherewith it is confirmed is

* The service of the mass. † Abrogated, done away.
‡ Do this.

eternal, for it is the blood of the eternal Son of God. Only the blood of Jesus Christ taketh away our sins, for it is he alone that taketh away the sins of the world; and who by his own blood hath reconciled all. For if sin might have been otherwise taken away, then Christ had died in vain; and if full remission stood not in him alone, then they that ate him still hungered, and they that drank him still thirsted; and that were contrary to his own words, "The blood of Christ is once offered," and it is sufficient, for it is the eternal blood of the eternal Son of God. And "by his own blood hath he once entered into the holy place." Therefore the blood of Christ once offered remaineth for ever, for purgation of all sins. And so there remaineth then no sacrifice in the mass. Mark that this reason is president,* and give place to the verity, for which the scriptures of God shall be held to be authority; never are they able to do away their arguments.

Consider now, brethren, if the opinion of the mass be not vain, false, and deceivable? Caused they not you to believe that it was a sacrifice, whereby remission of sins was obtained? And you may plainly perceive that there is no sacrifice, nor at any time was there any for sins, but the death of Jesus Christ only. For the sacrifices of the old law were only figures of that real and true sacrifice once offered by Jesus Christ. And in them was commemoration of sins made, but remission of sin was neither obtained nor cleansing made by any such sacrifice. What will ye do, papist priests? There remaineth no sacrifice to be offered for sin by you, nor by any mortal man. These are dolorous tidings unto your hearts, and no marvel; for by that vain opinion that the mass was a sacrifice for sin have ye so quietly rested by that flood of Euphrates,† that is, in all worldly felicity, which flowed unto you as a continual flood. But the mass is known not only to be no sacrifice, but also to be idolatry. The waters appear to dry up, and it is likely that ye lack some liquor to refresh your tongues, being scorched with drought and intolerable heat. Would ye then hear glad tidings? What if I, as one willing to play the good fellow and not to be stiff-necked, should allow to you that the mass were a sacrifice for sin, and that ye did offer Jesus Christ for sin, would ye be content if this were granted unto you? I think ye would, for therefore have ye long contended.

* All powerful. † The waters of Babylon.

Then let us consider, what should follow thereupon.—A sacrifice for sin was never perfect until the animal offered was slain. If in your mass ye offer Jesus Christ for sin, then necessarily in your mass must ye needs kill Jesus Christ. Do not esteem, beloved brethren, these words briefly spoken, to be vain or of small effect. They are collected from the very ground of scriptures, for they plainly testify that for Christ to be offered, Christ to suffer, and Christ to shed his blood or die, are all one thing. Paul, in the epistle to the Hebrews, saith, He appears now in the presence of God for us; not to offer himself often—times for us, for otherwise it behoved him to have suffered oftentimes, from the beginning of the world. Mark well, that Paul makes, to offer and to suffer, both to be one thing; and therefore he proves that Christ made but one sacrifice, because he once did suffer the death. Jesus Christ saith, as is written in Matthew, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you and for many, for remission of sins." Mark, that remission of sins is attributed to the shedding of Christ's blood. And Paul saith, "Christ is dead for our sins." And in another place, "By one oblation or sacrifice hath he made us perfect for ever." Consider diligently, that remission of sins is attributed sometimes to the shedding of Christ's blood, sometimes to his death, and sometimes to the whole sacrifice which he made in suffering all pain. And why this? Is it because there are divers manners to obtain remission of sins? No, but because every one of these three necessarily follows the other, remission of sins, it is commonly ascribed to any of them. For wherever Christ is offered, there is his blood shed, and his death subsequently follows.

And so, papists, if ye offer Christ in sacrifice for sin, ye shed his blood, and thus newly slay him. Mark, to what sin your own desire shall bring you! Even to be slayers of Jesus Christ! You will say, you never pretended such abomination. I dispute not what you intended, but only I show what absurdity doth follow upon your own doctrine. For necessarily if ye do offer Christ for sin, as ye do confess, and as your law teaches, ye cruelly do shed his blood, and finally do slay him. But now will I relieve you of this anguish, grievous it were daily to commit manslaughter, and oftentimes to crucify the King of glory. But be not afraid: ye do it not; for Jesus Christ may suffer no more, shed his blood no more, and die no more. For

that he died, he so died for sin, and that once; and now he liveth, and death may not prevail against him. And so ye do not slay Christ, for ye have no power to do the same. Only ye have deceived the people, causing them to believe, that ye offered Jesus Christ in sacrifice for sin, in your mass; which is frivolous and false; for Jesus Christ may not be offered, because he may not die.

I most gently exhort all who desire to object against what I have said, rightly to consider the ground thereof; which stands not upon the opinion of man, but upon the infallible word of God; and to resume every part of these arguments, and lay them to the whole body of God's scripture; and then, I doubt not, but all men whose senses the prince of darkness and of this world hath not blinded, shall confess with me, that in the mass there can be no sacrifice for sin. And yet, to the great blasphemy of Christ's death, and open denial of his passion, it has been affirmed, taught, and believed, that the mass was a sacrifice for the sins of the quick and the dead; which opinion is most false, vain, and wicked. And so I think no man of indifferent* judgment will deny the mass to be abomination and idolatry.

Let no man intend to excuse the mass by the precept of the Lord's Supper; for now I will shortly prove that therewith it hath no congruence,† but is expressly contrary to it, and hath taken the remembrance of the same out of mind. And further, it is blasphemous to the death of Jesus Christ. They are contrary in their institution; for the Lord's Supper was instituted to be a perpetual memorial of those benefits which we have received by Jesus Christ, and by his death. And first we should call to mind in what estate we stood in our father Adam, when in him we all blaspheme‡ the majesty of God to his face. Secondly, that his own incomprehensible goodness moved him to love us, most wretched and miserable, the most wicked and blasphemous. And most perfect love compelled him to show mercy; and mercy pronounced the sentence, which was, that his only Son should pay the price of our redemption. Which thing being rightly called to memory in the present action‡ of the Supper, could not but move us to unfeigned thanksgiving unto God the Father, and to his only Son Jesus, who hath restored us again to liberty and life. And this is it which Paul commands,

* Impartial. † Agreement. ‡ The celebration.

saying, "As oft as ye shall eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, ye shall declare the Lord's death till he come." That is, ye shall laud, magnify, and extol the liberal kindness of God the Father, and the infinite benefits which ye have received by Christ's death.

But the mass is instituted, as the plain words thereof, and their own laws do witness, to be a sacrifice for the sins of the quick and the dead; for doing of which sacrifice God is bound, not only to remit our sins, but also to give unto us whatever we will ask. And that is shown by the divers masses celebrated for divers causes, some for peace in time of war, some for rain, some for fair weather, yea, and (alas, my heart abhors such abomination!) some for sickness of beasts.* They will say, they severally make prayers for obtaining such things; and that is all which I desire they should say—for obtaining such vain trifles, they destine their whole purpose; and so profane the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, (if that were any sacrament which they abused so,) which should never be used but in memory of Christ's death. Then it should not be used to pray that the tooth-ache be taken away from us; that our oxen should not take the lowing ill, our horses the spavin or fersie,† and so of all manner of diseases of our cattle. What was it wherefore ye would not say mass, perverse papists? But let us hear more; the Supper of our Lord is the gift of Jesus Christ, in which we should laud the infinite mercy of God. The mass is a sacrifice which we offer unto God, for doing whereof we allege God should love and commend us. In the Supper of our Lord we confess ourselves redeemed from sin by the death and blood of Jesus Christ only. In the mass we crave remission of sins, yea, and whatsoever thing we list, by working of that same work which we then ourselves do. And herein the mass is blasphemous unto Christ and his passion. For in so far as it offers or promises remission of sins, it imputes imperfection upon

* Luther reflects in strong terms upon the mass, and upon the church of Rome which asserted that the canon of the mass and all its ceremonies are according to the precepts of the gospel, also that the benefits of the sacrament are to be sold for a few pence, for the advantage of souls in purgatory, sailors on a voyage, merchants on a journey, and sick persons remaining at home; without any mention of faith, or the support of the gospel.—Seckendorf de Lutheranismo, III. p. 7.

† Distempers incident to cattle.

Christ and his sacrifice; affirming that all sins are not remitted by his death, but that a great part are reserved to be cleansed by virtue and the value of the mass. Also it is injurious to Christ Jesus, and that not only by speaking most falsely of him, but also by usurping to itself that which is proper to him alone. For he affirms that he alone has, by his own death, purged the sins of the world; and that no part remains to be cleansed by any other means. But the mass sings another song, which is—that every day, by that oblation offered by the priests, sin is purged and remission obtained.

Consider, papists, what honour your mass gives unto Christ Jesus.

Lastly: In the Supper of the Lord, we grant* ourselves eternal debtors unto God, and unable any way to make satisfaction for his infinite benefits which we have received. But in the mass, we allege God to be debtor unto us for the oblation of that sacrifice, which we there offer, and dare affirm that we there make satisfaction by doing thereof, for the sins of ourselves and others. Let men judge with indifference,† if these be not contrary to each other. They differ in use; for in the Lord's Supper, the minister and congregation eat both at one table; no difference is betwixt them in preeminence or habit, as witnesses Jesus Christ with his disciples, and the practice of the apostles after his death. But in the papistical mass, the priests (so will they be styled) are placed by themselves at an altar. And I would ask of the authority thereof, and what scripture commandeth so to be done. They must be clad in a several habit,‡ whereof no men-

* Confess. † Impartiality.

‡ Knox here refers to the dresses worn by the Romish priests while saying mass. They are thus described in the Romish works of devotion.

"The *Amice*, a linen cloth which the priest pulls over his face and fastens on his neck, signifies the rag of linen wherewith the Jews blinded Christ.—The *Alb*, a white linen garment, represents the garment which Herod put on Christ.—The *Maniple* worn on the left arm, the *Stole* that hangeth about his neck, and the *Girdle*, do figure the cords and fetters with which the Jews bound Christ.—The *Chasuble*, that is the upper garment, doth express the purple garment the soldiers put on Christ, and the heavy cross also that Christ carried on his blessed shoulders on mount Calvary. The priest's *Tonsure*, that is to say the crown of his head shaved in fashion of a round circle, doth represent the crown of thorns," &c. See explanation of the Mass in *The Key of Heaven*, 1823, p. 20.

The colours of the priestly ornaments used in the Romish church service vary at different seasons. Upon different days they are

tion is made in the New Testament. It will not excuse them to say, Paul commanded all to be done with order and decently. Dare they be so bold as to affirm, that the Supper of Jesus Christ was done without order and indecently, wherein were seen no such disguised vestments? Or will they set up to us again the Levitical priesthood? Should not all be taught according to the plain word? Prelates and priests, I ask one question. Ye would be like to the vestments of Aaron in all things;—Aaron had affixed unto his garments certain bells, which were commanded to ring, and to make sound, as oft as he was clad therewith. But, priests, your bells want tongues; they ring not, they sound nothing but of the earth, the people understand nothing of all your ceremonies. Fear ye not the wrath of God? It was commanded Aaron, that the sound of his bells should be heard, that he died not.* Consider this, for the matter appertaineth unto you!

In the Supper of the Lord, we all equally participate, the bread being broken, and the cup being distributed amongst all, according to his holy commandment. In the papistical mass, the congregation get nothing, except the beholding of your jerkings, noddings, crossings, turnings, upliftings, all which are nothing but a diabolical profanation of Christ's Supper. Now jerk, cross, and nod, as ye list, they are but your inventions. And finally, brethren, ye got nothing but gazing and beholding, while one did eat and drink all.† It shall not excuse you to say that the congregation participate spiritually. O wicked antichrists,

white, red, purple or violet, green, and black, to each of which a mystical meaning is attached.

During the reign of Edward VI. the Romish services were continued in several parts of England, particularly in the North, where bishop Tonstal protested against the Reformation and continued a Romanist, although he had promised obedience to the laws. Even in London, the cathedrals of St. Paul's and Westminster in 1550 were found not to be wholly freed from the Romish services and apparel; and three years later especial injunctions were given to the lord president of the North, in which his attention was particularly directed to the promotion of true religion and the removal of popery. In 1552 it was discovered that the Romish service was continued in one of the colleges at Oxford. See *Strype and Burnet.*

* Exod. xxviii. 35.

† The priest alone receives in the daily mass. Knox alludes to the numerous changes of attitude and posture of the massing priest, which are delineated in some of the Romish books of devotion, and also in Picart's Ceremonies.

saith not Jesus Christ, " Eat of this, drink of this, all do this in remembrance of me." Christ commanded not that one should gaze upon it, bow, jerk, and beck thereto, but that we should eat and drink thereof ourselves, and not that we should behold others do the same; unless we would confess the death of Jesus Christ not to appertain to us. For when I eat and drink at that table, I openly confess the fruit and virtue of Christ's body, of his blood, and passion, to appertain to myself; and that I am a member of his mystical body; and that God the Father is appeased with me, notwithstanding my first corruptions and present infirmities. Judge, brethren, what comfort hath this taken from us, who will that the sight thereof shall be sufficient. I would ask, first, if the sight of corporeal meat and drink doth feed or nourish the body? I think they will say nay; and I affirm, that the soul receives no more profit in beholding another eat and drink the Lord's true Supper, (as for their idolatry it is always damnable,) than the body in beholding another eat and drink, and you receiving no part thereof.

But now brethren, let this contrariety be collected.* In the Lord's Supper are offered thanks for the benefits which we have received of God. In the mass, the papist will compel God to grant all that he asks of him, by virtue of that sacrifice; and so he alleges that God should refer thanks unto him that doth the mass. In the Supper of the Lord, the partakers humbly confess themselves redeemed only by Christ's blood, which once was shed. In the mass, the priest vaunts himself to make a sacrifice for the sins of the quick and the dead. In the Lord's Supper, all the partakers of that table grant and confess themselves debtors unto God; unable to return thanks for the benefits which we have received of his liberality. In the papistical mass, the priest alleges that God is a debtor to him, and unto all them for whom he makes that sacrifice; so he affirms remission of sins is to be obtained thereby. And in that, the mass is blasphemous to Christ's death. In the Lord's Supper, all sit at one table; no difference in habit or vestment between the minister and congregation.† In the papistical mass, the priests are placed by

* Let these contradictions be examined.

† Respecting the posture in which the Lord's Supper is received, and the habit of the minister, there have always been and are still differences of opinion amongst protestants. Knox here refers to the

themselves at an altar, as they call it; and are clad in disguised garments. In the Lord's Supper, all eat of one bread, and drink of one cup. But in the mischievous mass, one man did eat and drink all.

Consider now, beloved brethren, what have the fruits of the mass been, even in the greatest purity. The mass is nothing but the invention of man, set up for honouring of God, without any authority of God's word; and therefore it is idolatry. Unto it is added a vain, false, deceivable, and most wicked opinion; that is, that by it is obtained remission of sins; and therefore, it is abomination before God. It is contrary to the Supper of Jesus Christ, and has taken away the right use and remembrance thereof, and therefore it is blasphemous to Christ's death. Maintain and defend the papistical mass whoso list, this honour and service unto God did all which used the same. And here I speak not of the most abominable abuses, such as buying and selling, used now of late by the mischievous priests, but of the mass in her high degree, and most honest garments. Even of the great gaudiamus sung or said by Gregory the great, as papists do call him.

Let no man think, that because I am in the realm of England, therefore I speak so boldly against this abomination; no, God has taken that suspicion from me. For this my body lying in most painful bonds in the midst of cruel tyrants,* his mercy and goodness prompted that the hand should write, and bear witness to the confession of the heart more abundantly than ever yet tongue spake.

And here I call my God to record, that neither profit to myself, hatred to any person or persons, nor affection or favour that I bear towards any private man, causes me this day to speak as you have heard; but only the obedience which I owe unto God in ministration and showing of his word, and the common love which I bear to the salvation of all men. For so odious and abominable I know the mass to be in God's presence, that unless they decline from the same, they never can attain to life. And, therefore, brethren, flee from that idolatry rather than from present death.

methods adopted by the Swiss or Helvetian Churches, and those which followed their model; but all Protestant Churches disclaim any adoration of the host, or that there is any sanctity in vestments which gives the least efficacy to this ordinance: the aim of all being only that *all things be done decently and in order*. The Romish garments have been described in a preceding note.

* Knox alludes to his imprisonment on board the French gallies.

Here would I have spoken of the diversity of sacrifices, but neither time nor the present opportunity permit that I do so. I will you should observe, that where I say, there remains no sacrifice, neither yet are there any priests; that I mean, there remaineth no sacrifice to be offered for sin, neither yet are there any priests having power to offer such oblations. Otherwise, I do know that all true christians are kings and priests, and do daily offer unto God a sacrifice most acceptable; even the mortification of their affections, as Paul commanded the Romans. But hereof may not I remain to speak at present.

Such doctrine as was taught in your audience, on Sunday before noon, I will prove, as opportunity will permit, by God's scriptures, not only to be unprofitable, but also erroneous and deceivable. But first, according to my promise, I will send unto the teacher, the extract thereof to add or diminish, as by his wisdom shall be thought most expedient. For God knoweth my mind is not captiously inclined to entrap men in words. But, my only desire being, that ye, my audience, may be instructed in the verity; wherefrom dissenteth some doctrine taught you, (if I have collected it truly,) it moves me to speak against all that may have appearance of lies and superstition.

And pray with me, brethren, that the Spirit may be ministered unto me in abundance, to speak at all times as it becomes a true messenger. And I will likewise pray that ye may hear, understand, and obey with all reverence, the good will of God, declared unto the world by Jesus Christ, whose omnipotent Spirit remain with you for ever. Amen. Give the glory to God alone.

JOHN KNOX.

NOTE referred to in page 154.

Knox here refers to "the greater litany" of the church of Rome, which that church ascribes to pope Gregory I. Many writers, however, consider that the invocations to saints contained therein were added by later popes in more corrupt times. (See Wheatly and others.) Basnage, a divine of the reformed church, and an able ecclesiastical historian, notices the subject of ancient litanies very fully in his history of the church. (p. 4, liv. xxi. ch. 3.) He says, that the term originally signified prayers offered in the public services of the church, but in the sixth century it was applied to processions made from one church to another, in times of public calamity, when psalms were sung and prayers offered, which latter were also called rogations. During the sixth century they were very common in France, Spain, Italy, and other countries. Basnage then shows, that Mamertus, bishop of Vienna, was the original author of "the great litany," which doubtless was compiled from the prayers used in the preceding centuries, and that it was addressed to God alone, to deprecate his wrath. Mamertus lived about A. D. 460. (See also Dupin, cent. v. art. Sidonius.) Basnage further states, that the mention made of the early litanies describe them only as supplications to the Almighty, without any mention of saints. He considers the assertions of Romish writers, who represent that they contained such invocations, to be wholly unfounded, while it is admitted by competent authorities that "the earliest litanies which remain, and which contain addresses to saints, were not written before the conclusion of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth centuries."

The historical event referred to by Knox is thus related by the earliest biographers of Gregory. In 590, Rome suffered very severely from an infectious distemper, when Gregory, not then installed in the popedom, preached a sermon, earnestly calling upon the people to repent. The conclusion is preserved in his works, and contains an exhortation to the people to unite publicly in supplication to God, appointing that they should meet at day-break in seven different companies, according to their respective ages, sex, and stations, and walk in seven processions, reciting litanies or supplications, till they all met at one place. They did so, and proceeded singing and uttering the words, "Lord have mercy upon us." In the space of one hour, while thus engaged, eighty persons fell to the ground, and breathed their last. (Vit. Greg. a Jo. Diac. xlii. et seq. See also Fleury, liv. 35, § 1. Baron. Annal. 590, p. 6.) Baronius relates, that Gregory caused an image of the virgin to be carried on this occasion. With regard to the persons who died while thus engaged, we may remember that the plague then raged fiercely, and doubtless many had assembled who were already infected by it. Such deaths occurred in the congregations assembled in London during the plague of 1666.

There is no account which shows what were the litanies used at this time; and the mention of litanies in the writings of Gregory, when he exhorts the people to use them upon other and subsequent occasions, speaks of them as supplications to the Lord, in terms which could hardly have been employed had they contained invocations to saints. (Greg. Op. prefix. ad ep. lib. 2. ep. ix. 45.) There are passages in Gregory's antiphonary, sacramentary, and epistles, which show that he thought benefit was to be derived from the intercession of saints, but

the sacramentary, which makes the most express mention of this superstitious practice, does it as a commemoration, and an expression of veneration for their memories, as aiding mankind by their prayers: this although deserving of most severe censure, is not the direct invocation contained in the popish litanies, and it should be observed, that Dupin, a Roman catholic, says it is very certain that these parts of Gregory's writings were interpolated in later days. Neither has any Romish historian of early or later date stated that Gregory used invocations of saints in this litany. Gregory of Tours, who lived subsequently, and was much farther gone in superstition, mentions the particulars of this event, and also refers more than once to the subject of litanies, but speaks of them so as to confirm the statement of Basnage. (Gregor. Turro. lib. x. § 31, see also his account of Quintianus's prayers for rain.)

These observations are not made with a view to palliate the superstitions which were introduced into the church by Gregory or his predecessors, nor to excuse the conduct of the former in any respect, but merely as a fuller and more correct historical account, which the statement of Knox appeared to render necessary.

"The great litany" used for many centuries by the church of Rome, undoubtedly contains several excellent prayers used in the early ages of the church, to which are prefixed the names of many saints, with an entreaty that they would pray for us. The examination of various copies, presents a striking and painful exhibition of the manner in which these were adopted and changed at different periods, previous to the council of Trent. The acts of the general chapters of the preaching friars, A. D. 1285 and 1286, contain directions to introduce the names of four saints into the litany, only one of which is found at the present time. (Thes. Anec. vol. iv. p. 1812, 1816.) On comparing "the greater litany," as it at present stands, (see the Rituale Rom. Plantin, 1770, and others,) with a breviary printed at Venice in 1497, it appears that no less than ten saints, out of fifty-three mentioned by name in the earlier works, are now omitted. Another breviary, printed at Lyons in 1499, contains fifty-seven! It should also be remarked, that these are in addition to the general invocation of ALL angels, martyrs, popes, monks, nuns, &c.—and a more extended examination would doubtless show that many other individual names had also been included at different times.

When the light of the Reformation began to display the gross superstitions of popery, the variety of formularies was a subject which came under the notice of the council of Trent. But it remained one of the last for consideration, and the council, being in haste to conclude its sittings, committed the reformation of the service book to the pope, and it was accordingly set forth in a corrected form by Pius V. The Roman litany now contains direct invocations to forty-three individuals, (those included under general appellations are innumerable,) and to use any other formulary designedly, and without what the pope may consider a reasonable cause, is declared to be *a mortal sin!* Decret. Con. Trident. Sess. ult. Decemb. 4, 1563. Ed. Coloniæ, 1564. See also Declar. Gallemart. Lugdun. 1676, p. 791.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Here is briefly declared in a sum, according to the holy scriptures, what opinion we christians have of the Lord's Supper, called The Sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

BY JOHN KNOX.

First, we confess that it is a holy action, ordained of God, in the which the Lord Jesus, by earthly and visible things set before us, lifts us up unto heavenly and invisible things. And that when he had prepared his spiritual banquet, he witnessed that he himself was the lively* bread wherewith our souls are fed unto everlasting life. And, therefore, in setting forth bread and wine to eat and drink, he confirms and seals up to us his promise and communion, that is, that we shall be partakers with him in his kingdom; and he represents unto us, and makes plain to our senses, his heavenly gifts. And also gives unto us himself, to be received with faith, and not with mouth, nor yet by transfusion of substance; but so, through the virtue† of the Holy Ghost, that we being fed with his flesh, and refreshed with his blood, may be renewed both unto true godliness and to immortality. And also that herewith the Lord Jesus gathered us unto one visible body, so that we are members one of another, and make all together one body, whereof Jesus Christ is the only Head; and, finally, that by the same sacrament the Lord calls us to the remembrance of his death and passion, to stir up our hearts to praise his most holy name.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that this sacrament ought to be come unto reverently, considering there is exhibited and given a testimony of the wonderful society and knitting together of the Lord Jesus and of the receivers: and also that there is included and contained in this sacrament that he will preserve his church. For herein we are commanded to show the Lord's death until he come.

* Living. † Power.

Also we believe that it is a confession, wherein we show what kind of doctrine we profess, and what congregation we join ourselves unto. And likewise, that it is a bond of mutual love amongst us. And, finally, we believe that all the comers unto this holy Supper must bring with them their conversion unto the Lord, by unfeigned repentance in faith; and in this sacrament receive the seals and confirmation of their faith; and yet must in nowise think that for this work's sake their sins are forgiven.

And as concerning these words, "Hoc est corpus meum," (this is my body,) on which the papists depend so much, saying, that we must needs believe that the bread and wine are transubstantiated unto Christ's body and blood: we declare, that it is no article of our faith, which can save us, nor unto which we are bound upon pain of eternal damnation. For if we should believe that Christ's real natural body, both flesh and blood, were naturally in the bread and wine, that should not save us, seeing many believe that, and yet receive it to their damnation. For it is not his presence in the bread that can save us, but his presence in our hearts, through faith in his blood, which hath washed out our sins, and pacified his Father's wrath towards us. And again, if we do not believe his bodily presence in the bread and wine, that shall not damn us, but the absence out of our hearts through unbelief.

Now, if they would here object, that though it be truth, that the absence out of the bread could not damn us, yet are we bound to believe it because of God's word, saying, "This is my body;" which whoso believeth not, as much as in him lieth, maketh God a liar. And, therefore, an obstinate mind not to believe his word may be our damnation. To this we answer, that we believe God's word, and confess that it is true, but not so to be understood as the papists grossly affirm. For in the sacrament we receive Jesus Christ spiritually, as did the fathers of the Old Testament, according to St. Paul's saying. And if men would well weigh, how that Christ, ordaining his holy sacrament of his body and blood, spake these words sacramentally, doubtless they would never so grossly and foolishly understand them, contrary to all the scriptures, and to the exposition of Augustine, Jerome, Fulgentius, Vigilius, Origen, and many other godly writers.

A

NOTABLE AND COMFORTABLE EXPOSITION

OF

M. JOHN KNOX,

UPON

THE FOURTH OF MATTHEW,

CONCERNING THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST.

First had in the public church, and afterwards written for the comfort of certain private friends, and now published for the benefit of all that fear God.

This exposition upon the temptations of Christ was printed in London by John Field in 1583. He dedicates it to mistress Anne Prouze, of Exeter, from whom he had received the manuscript. She was the widow of a minister named Deering, who died in 1576, and whose views, as to doctrine and discipline, in many respects were very similar to those of Knox. The precise time when it was written does not appear, but it is in the manuscript volume containing his early pieces, mentioned by Crawford, and now in the possession of Dr. M'Crie, who kindly supplied the transcript for this work.

UPON

THE FIRST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW.—CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

"*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert that he should be tempted of the devil.*"

THE cause moving me to treat of this place of scripture is, that such as by the inscrutable providence of God fall into divers temptations, judge not themselves by reason thereof to be less acceptable in God's presence. But, on the contrary, having the way prepared to victory by Christ Jesus, they shall not fear above measure the crafty assaults of that subtle serpent satan—but with joy and bold courage, having such a guide as here is pointed forth, such a champion, and such weapons as here are to be found, (if with obedience we will hear, and unfeigned faith believe,) we may assure ourselves of God's present favour, and of final victory, by the means of Him, who, for our safeguard and deliverance, entered in the battle, and triumphed over his adversary, and all his raging fury. And that this being heard and understood, may the better be kept in memory; this order, by God's grace, we purpose to observe, in treating the matter, *First*, What this word temptation meaneth, and how it is used within the scriptures. *Secondly*, Who is here tempted, and at what time this temptation happened. *Thirdly*, How and by what means he was tempted. *Fourthly*, Why he should suffer these temptations, and what fruit ensues to us from the same.

First, Temptation, or to tempt, in the scriptures of God, is called to try, to prove, or to assault the valour, the power, the will, the pleasure, or the wisdom—whether it be of God, or of creatures. And it is taken sometimes in good part, as when it is said that God tempted Abraham; God tempted the people of Israel; that is, God did try and examine them, not for his own

knowledge, to whom nothing is hid, but to certify others how obedient Abraham was to God's commandment, and how weak and inferior the Israelites were in their journey towards the promised land. And this temptation is always good, because it proceeds immediately from God, to open and make manifest the secret motions of men's hearts, the puissance and power of God's word, and the great lenity and gentleness of God towards the iniquities (yea, horrible sins and rebellions) of those whom he hath received into his regimen and care. For who could have believed that the bare word of God could so have moved the heart and affections of Abraham, that to obey God's commandment he determined to kill, with his own hand, his best beloved son Isaac? who could have trusted that, so many torments as Job suffered, he should not speak in all his great temptations one foolish word against God? or who could have thought that God so mercifully should have pardoned so many, and so manifest transgressions committed by his people in the desert, and yet that his mercy never utterly left them, but still continued with them, till at length he performed his promise made to Abraham? Who, I say, would have been persuaded of these things, unless by trials and temptations taken of his creatures by God, they had come by revelation made in his holy scriptures to our knowledge. And so this kind of temptation* is profitable, good, and necessary, as a thing proceeding from God, who is the fountain of all goodness, to the manifestation of his own glory, and to the profit of the sufferer, however the flesh may judge in the hour of temptation. Otherwise temptation, or to tempt, is taken in evil part; that is, he that assaults or assails intends destruction and confusion to him that is assaulted. As when satan tempted the woman in the garden, Job by divers tribulations, and David by adultery. The scribes and pharisees tempted Christ by divers means, questions, and subtleties. And of this matter, saith St. James, "God tempteth no man;" that is, by temptation proceeding immediately from him, he intends no man's destruction. And here you shall note, that although satan appear sometimes to prevail against God's elect, yet he is ever frustrated of his final purpose. By temptation he led Eve and David from the obedience of God, but he

* "Temptation" is frequently used by the reformers to express what is now meant by "trial."

could not retain them for ever under his thraldom. Power was granted to him to spoil Job of his substance and children, and to strike his body with a plague and sickness most vile and fearful, but he could not compel his mouth to blaspheme God's majesty; and, therefore, although we are laid open sometimes, as it were, to tribulation for a time, it is that when he has poured forth the venom of his malice against God's elect, it may return to his own confusion, and that the deliverance of God's children may be more to his glory, and the comfort of the afflicted: knowing that his hand is so powerful, his mercy and goodwill so prompt, that he delivers his little ones from their cruel enemy, even as David did his sheep and lambs from the mouth of the lion. For a benefit received in extreme danger more moves us than the preservation from ten thousand perils, so that we fall not into them. And yet to preserve from dangers and perils so that we fall not into them, whether they are of body or spirit, is no less the work of God, than to deliver from them; but the weakness of our faith does not perceive it; this I leave at the present.

Also; to tempt means simply to prove, or try without any determinate purpose of profit or damage to ensue; as when the mind doubteth of any thing, and therein desires to be satisfied, without great love or extreme hatred of the thing that is tempted or tried. As the queen of Sheba came to tempt Solomon in subtle questions. David tempted, that is, tried himself if he could go in harness. (1 Sam. xvii.) And Gideon said, Let not thine anger kindle against me, if I tempt thee this once again. This famous queen, not fully trusting the report and fame that was spread of Solomon, by subtle questions desired to prove his wisdom; at the first, neither extremely hating nor fervently loving the person of the king. And David, as a man not accustomed to harness, would try how he was able to go, and behave and fashion himself therein, before he would hazard battle with Goliath so armed. And Gideon, not satisfied in his conscience by the first sign that he received, desired, without contempt or hatred of God, a second time to be certified of his vocation. In this sense must the apostle be expounded when he commands us to tempt, that is, to try and examine ourselves, if we stand in the faith. Thus much for the term.

Now to the person tempted, and to the time and place of his temptation. The person tempted is the only

well-beloved Son of God; the time was immediately after his baptism; and the place was the desert or wilderness. But that we derive advantage from what is related, we must consider the same more profoundly. That the Son of God was thus tempted gives instruction to us, that temptations, although they be ever so grievous and fearful, do not separate us from God's favour and mercy, but rather declare the great graces of God to appertain to us, which makes satan to rage as a roaring lion; for against none does he so fiercely fight, as against those of whose hearts Christ has taken possession.

The time of Christ's temptation is here most diligently to be noted. And that was, as Mark and Luke witness, immediately after the voice of God the Father had commended his Son to the world, and had visibly pointed to him by the sign of the Holy Ghost; he was led or moved by the Spirit to go to a wilderness, where forty days he remained fasting among the wild beasts. This Spirit which led Christ into the wilderness was not the devil, but the holy Spirit of God the Father, by whom Christ, as touching his human and manly nature, was conducted and led; likewise by the same Spirit he was strengthened and made strong, and, finally, raised up from the dead. The Spirit of God, I say, led Christ to the place of his battle, where he endured the combat for the whole forty days and nights. As Luke saith, "He was tempted," but in the end most vehemently, after his continual fasting, and that he began to be hungry. Upon this forty days and this fasting of Christ do our papists found and build their Lent; for, say they, all the actions of Christ are our instructions; what he did we ought to follow. But he fasted forty days, therefore we ought to do the like. I answer, that if we ought to follow all Christ's actions, then ought we neither to eat or drink for the space of forty days, for so fasted Christ: we ought to go upon the waters with our feet; to cast out devils by our word; to heal and cure all sorts of maladies; to call again the dead to life; for so did Christ. This I write only that men may see the vanity of those who, boasting themselves of wisdom, are become mad fools.

Did Christ fast thus forty days to teach us superstitious fasting? Can the papists assure me, or any other man, which were the forty days that Christ fasted? plain it is he fasted the forty days and nights that immediately followed his baptism, but which they were, or in what month

was the day of his baptism, scripture does not express; and although the day were expressed, am I or any christian bound to counterfeit Christ's actions as the ape counterfeits the act or work of man? He himself requires no such obedience of his true followers, but saith to the apostles, "Go and preach the gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; commanding them to observe and keep all that I have commanded you." Here Christ Jesus requires the observance of his precepts and commandments, not of his actions, except in so far as he had also commanded them; and so must the apostle be understood when he saith, "Be followers of Christ, for Christ hath suffered for us, that we should follow his footsteps," which cannot be understood of every action of Christ, either in the mystery of our redemption, or in his actions and marvellous works, but only of those which he hath commanded us to observe. But where the papists are so diligent in establishing their dreams and fantasies, they lose the profit that here is to be gathered,—that is, why Christ fasted those forty days; which were a doctrine more necessary for christians, than to corrupt the simple hearts with superstition, as though the wisdom of God, Christ Jesus, had taught us no other mystery by his fasting than the abstinence from flesh, or once on the day to eat flesh, for the space of forty days. God hath taken a just vengeance upon the pride of such men, while he thus confounds the wisdom of those that do most glory in wisdom, and strikes with blindness such as will be guides and lanterns to the feet of others, and yet refuse themselves to hear or follow the light of God's word. From such deliver thy poor flock, O Lord!

The causes of Christ's fasting these forty days I find chiefly to be two: The first, to witness to the world the dignity and excellence of his vocation, which Christ, after his baptism, was to take upon him openly: The other, to declare that he entered into battle willingly for our cause, and does, as it were, provoke his adversary to assault him, although Christ Jesus, in the eternal counsel of his Father, was appointed to be the Prince of peace, the angel (that is, the messenger) of his testament, and he alone that could fight our battles for us, yet he did not enter in execution of it, in the sight of men, till he was commended to mankind by the voice of his heavenly Father; and as he was placed and anointed by the Holy Ghost by a visible sign given to

the eyes of men. After which time he was led to the desert, and fasted, as before is said; and this he did to teach us with what fear, carefulness, and reverence the messengers of the word ought to enter on their vocation, which is not only most excellent (for who is worthy to be God's ambassador?) but also subject to most extreme troubles and dangers. For he that is appointed pastor, watchman, or preacher, if he feed not with his whole power, if he warn and admonish not when he sees the snare come, and if, in doctrine, he divide not the word righteously, the blood and souls of those that perish for lack of food, admonition, and doctrine, shall be required of his hand.

But to our purpose; that Christ exceeded not the space of forty days in his fasting, he did it to the imitation of Moses and Elias; of whom, the one before the receiving of the law, and the other before the communication and reasoning which he had with God in mount Horeb, in which he was commanded to anoint Hazael king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet, fasted the same number of days. The events that ensued and followed this supernatural fasting of these two servants of God, Moses and Elias, impaired and diminished the tyranny and kingdom of satan. For by the law came the knowledge of sin, the damnation of such impieties, specially of idolatry, and such as the devil had invented; and, finally, by the law came such a revelation of God's will, that no man could justly afterward excuse his sin by ignorance, by which the devil before had blinded many. So that the law, although it might not renew and purge the heart, for that the Spirit of Christ Jesus worketh by faith only, yet it was a bridle that did hinder and stay the rage of external wickedness in many, and was a schoolmaster that led unto Christ. For when man can find no power in himself to do that which is commanded, and perfectly understands, and when he believes that the curse of God is pronounced against all those that abide not in every thing that is commanded in God's law to do them—the man, I say, that understands and knows his own corrupt nature and God's severe judgment, most gladly will receive the free redemption offered by Christ Jesus, which is the only victory that overthrows satan and his power. And so by the giving of the law God greatly weakened, impaired, and made frail the tyranny and kingdom of the devil. In the days of Elias, the devil had so prevailed that kings and rulers

made open war against God, killing his prophets, destroying his ordinances, and building up idolatry; which did so prevail, that the prophet complained that of all the true fearers and worshippers of God he was left alone, and wicked Jezebel sought his life also. After this, his fasting and complaint, he was sent by God to anoint the persons aforenamed, who took such vengeance upon the wicked and obstinate idolaters, that he who escaped the sword of Hazael fell into the hands of Jehu, and those whom Jehu left, escaped not God's vengeance under Elisha.

The remembrance of this was fearful to satan, for, at the coming of Christ Jesus, impiety was in the highest degree amongst those that pretended most knowledge of God's will; and satan was at such rest in his kingdom, that the priests, scribes, and pharisees had taken away the key of knowledge; that is, they had so obscured and darkened God's holy scriptures, by false glosses and vain traditions, that neither would they enter themselves into the kingdom of God, nor suffer and permit others to enter; but with violence restrained, and with tyranny struck back from the right way, that is, from Christ Jesus himself, such as would have entered into the possession of life everlasting by him. Satan, I say, having such dominion over the chief rulers of the visible church, and espying in Christ such graces as before he had not seen in man, and considering him to follow in fasting the footsteps of Moses and Elias, no doubt greatly feared that the quietness and rest of his most obedient servants, the priests and their adherents, would be troubled by Christ. And, therefore, by all engines and craft, he assaults him to see what advantage he could have of him. And Christ did not repel him, as by the power of his Godhead he might have done, that he should not tempt him, but permitted him to spend all his artillery, and received the strokes and assaults of satan's temptations in his own body, to the end he might weaken and enfeeble the strength and tyrannous power of our adversary by his long suffering. For thus, methinks, our Master and Champion, Christ Jesus, provoked our enemy to battle; "Satan, thou gloriest of thy power and victories over mankind, that there is none able to withstand thy assaults, nor escape thy darts, but at one time or other thou givest him a wound: lo, I am a man like to my brethren, having flesh and blood, and all properties of man's nature, (sin, which is thy venom, excepted:) tempt, try,

and assault me; I offer you here a place most convenient—the wilderness. There shall be no mortal to comfort me against thy assaults; thou shalt have time sufficient; do what thou canst, I shall not fly the place of battle. If thou become victor, thou shalt still continue in possession of thy kingdom in this wretched world: but if thou canst not prevail against me, then must thy prey and unjust spoil be taken from thee: thou must grant thyself vanquished and confounded, and must be compelled to leave off from all accusation of the members of my body; for to them appertains the fruit of my battle, my victory is theirs, as I am appointed to take the punishment of their sins in my body."

O dear sisters, what comfort ought the remembrance of these signs to be to our hearts! Christ Jesus hath fought our battle; he himself hath taken us into his care and protection; however the devil may rage by temptations, be they spiritual or corporeal, he is not able to bereave us out of the hand of the almighty Son of God. To him be all glory for his mercies most abundantly poured upon us.

There remains yet to be spoken of, the time when our Lord was tempted, which began immediately after his baptism. Whereupon we have to note and mark, that although the malice of satan never ceases, but always seeks for means to trouble the godly, yet sometimes he rages more fiercely than others, and that is commonly when God begins to manifest his love and favour to any of his children, and at the end of their battle, when they are nearest to obtain final victory. The devil, no doubt, did at all times envy the humble spirit that was in Abel, but he did not stir up the cruel heart of Cain against him till God declared his favour towards him, by accepting his sacrifice. The same we find in Jacob, Joseph, David, and most evidently in Christ Jesus. How satan raged at the tidings of Christ's nativity! what blood he caused to be shed on purpose to have murdered Christ in his infancy! The evangelist St. Matthew witnesses that in all the coasts and borders of Bethlehem the children of two years old and of less age were murdered without mercy. A fearful spectacle and horrid example of insolent and unaccustomed tyranny! And what is the cause moving satan thus to rage against innocents, considering that, by reason of their imperfections, they could not hurt his kingdom at that instant? Oh! the crafty eye of satan looked further than to

the present time; he heard reports by the three wise men, that they had learned, by the appearance of a star, that the King of the Jews was born; and he was not ignorant that the time prophesied of Christ's coming was then instant; for a stranger was clad with the crown and sceptre in the kingdom of Judah. The angel had declared the glad tidings to the shepherds, that a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord, was born in the city of David. All these tidings inflamed the wrath and malice of satan, for he perfectly understood that the coming of the promised Seed was appointed to his confusion, and to the breaking down of his head and tyranny; and therefore he raged most cruelly, even at the first hearing of Christ's birth, thinking that although he could not hinder nor withstand his coming, yet he could shorten his days upon earth, lest by long life and peaceable quietness in it, the number of good men, by Christ's doctrine and virtuous life, should be multiplied; and so he strove to cut him away among the other children before he could open his mouth on his Father's message. Oh cruel serpent! in vain dost thou spend thy venom, for the days of God's elect thou canst not shorten! And when the wheat is fallen on the ground, then doth it most multiply.

But from these things mark, dear sisters, what hath been the practice of the devil from the beginning—most cruelly to rage against God's children, when God begins to show them his mercy. And, therefore, marvel not, dearly beloved, although the like come unto you. If satan fume or roar against you, whether it be against your bodies by persecution, or inwardly in your conscience by a spiritual battle, be not discouraged, as though you were less acceptable in God's presence, or as if satan might at any time prevail against you. No: your temptations and storms that arise so suddenly, argue and witness that the seed which is sown, is fallen in good ground, begins to take root, and shall, by God's grace, bring forth fruit abundantly in due season and convenient time. That is it which satan fears, and therefore thus he rages, and shall rage against you, thinking that if he can repulse you now suddenly in the beginning, that then you shall be at all times an easy prey, never able to resist his assaults. But as my hope is good, so shall my prayer be, that so you may be strengthened, that the world and satan himself may perceive or understand that God fights your battle. For you remember, sisters, that being present with you and

treating of the same place, I admonished you that satan could not long sleep when his kingdom was threatened. And therefore I willed you, if you were in mind to continue with Christ, to prepare yourselves for the day of temptation. The person of the speaker is wretched, miserable, and nothing to be regarded, but the things that were spoken, are the infallible and eternal truth of God ; without observation of which, life neither can nor shall come to mankind. God grant you continuance to the end.

This much have I briefly spoken of the temptation of Christ Jesus, who was tempted; and of the time and place of his temptation. Now remains to be spoken how he was tempted, and by what means. The most part of expositors think that all this temptation was in spirit and imagination only, the corporeal senses being nothing moved. I will contend with no man in such cases, but patiently will I suffer every man to abound in his own knowledge ; and without prejudice of any man's estimations, I offer my judgment to be weighed and considered by christian charity. It appears to me by the plain text, that Christ suffered this temptation in body and spirit. Likewise, as the hunger which Christ suffered, and the desert in which he remained, were not things offered to the imagination, but that the body did verily remain in the wilderness among beasts, and after forty days did hunger and faint for lack of food ; so the external ear did hear the tempting words of satan, which entered into the knowledge of the soul, and which, repelling the venom of such temptations, caused the tongue to speak and confute satan, to our unspeakable comfort and consolation. It appears also that the body of Christ Jesus was carried by satan from the wilderness unto the temple of Jerusalem, and that it was placed upon the pinnacle of the same temple, from whence it was carried to a high mountain and there tempted. If any man can show the contrary hereof by the plain scriptures of God, with all submission and thanksgiving, I will prefer his judgment to my own ; but if the matter stand only in probability and opinion of men, then it is lawful for me to believe as the scripture here speaks. That is, that satan spake and Christ answered, and satan took him and carried him from one place to another. Besides the evidence of the text affirming that satan was permitted to carry the body of Christ from place to place, and yet was not permitted to execute any further tyranny against it, is most singular comfort to

such as are afflicted or troubled in body or spirit. The weak and feeble conscience of man under such temptations, commonly gathers and collects a false consequence. For man reasons thus: The body or the spirit is vexed by assaults and temptations of satan, and he troubles or molests it, therefore God is angry with it, and takes no care of it. I answer, Tribulations or grievous vexations of body or of mind are never signs of God's displeasure against the sufferer, neither yet does it follow that God has cast away the care of his creatures, because he permits them to be molested and vexed for a time. For if any sort of tribulation were the infallible sign of God's displeasure, then should we condemn the best beloved children of God. But of this we may speak hereafter. Now to the temptation.

Verse 2nd. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry." Verse 3rd. "Then came to him the tempter, and said, If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," &c. Why Christ fasted forty days and would not exceed the same, without sense and feeling of hunger, is before touched upon, that is, he would provoke the devil to battle by the wilderness and long abstinence, but he would not usurp or arrogate any more to himself in that case than God had wrought with others, his servants and messengers before. But Christ Jesus, (as St. Augustine more amply declares,) without feeling of hunger, might have endured the whole year, or to time without end, as well as he did endure the space of forty days. For the nature of mankind was sustained those forty days by the invisible power of God, which is at all times of equal power. But Christ, willing to offer further occasion to satan to proceed in tempting of him, permitted the human nature to crave earnestly that which it lacked, that is to say, refreshing of meat; which satan perceiving took occasion, as before, to tempt and assault. Some judge that satan tempted Christ to gluttony but this appears little to agree with the purpose of the Holy Ghost; who shows us this history to let us understand that satan never ceases to oppugn the children of God, but continually, by one mean or other, drives or provokes them to some wicked opinions of their God; and to have them desire stones to be converted into bread, or to desire hunger to be satisfied, has never been sin, nor yet a wicked opinion of God. And therefore I doubt not but the temptation was more spiritual, more

subtle, and more dangerous. Satan had respect to the voice of God, which had pronounced Christ to be his well-beloved Son, &c. Against this voice he fights, as his nature is ever to do against the assured and immutable word of God: for such is his malice against God, and against his chosen children, that where and to whom God pronounces love and mercy, to these he threatens displeasure and damnation; and where God threatens death, there is he bold to pronounce life; and for this cause is satan called a liar from the beginning. And so the purpose of satan was to drive Christ into desperation, that he should not believe the former voice of God his Father; which appears to be the meaning of this temptation: "Thou hast heard," would satan say, "a voice proclaimed in the air, that thou wast the beloved Son of God, in whom his soul was well pleased; but mayst thou not be judged more than mad, and weaker than the brainless fool if thou believest any such promise? Where are the signs of his love? Art thou not cast out from comfort of all creatures? Thou art in worse case than the brute beasts, for every day they hunt for their prey, and the earth produces grass and herbs for their sustenance, so that none of them are pined and consumed away by hunger; but thou hast fasted forty days and nights, ever waiting for some relief and comfort from above, but thy best provision is hard stones! If thou dost glory in thy God, and dost verily believe the promise that is made, command that these stones be bread. But evident it is, that so thou canst not do; for if thou couldest, or if thy God would have showed thee any such pleasure, thou mightest long ago have removed thy hunger, and needest not have endured this languishing for lack of food. But seeing thou hast long continued thus, and no provision is made for thee, it is vanity longer to believe any such promise, and therefore despair of any help from God's hand, and provide for thyself by some other means!"

Many words have I used here, dearly beloved, but I cannot express the thousandth part of the malicious despite which lurked in this one temptation of satan. It was a mocking of Christ and of his obedience. It was a plain denial of God's promise. It was the triumphing voice of him that appeared to have gotten victory. Oh how bitter this temptation was, no creature can understand, but such as feel the grief of such darts as satan casts at the tender conscience of those that gladly would rest and repose in

God, and in the promises of his mercy. But here is to be noted the ground and foundation. The conclusion of satan is this,—Thou art none of God's elect, much less his well-beloved Son. His reason is this—Thou art in trouble and findest no relief. There the foundation of the temptation was Christ's poverty, and the lack of food without hope of remedy to be sent from God. And it is the same temptation which the devil objected to him by the princes of the priests in his grievous torments upon the cross ; for thus they cried, " If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him ; he trusted in God, let him deliver him, if he have pleasure in him." As though they would say, God is the deliverer of his servants from troubles ; God never permits those that fear him to come to confusion ; this man we see in extreme trouble ; if he be the Son of God, or even a true worshipper of his name, he will deliver him from this calamity. If he deliver him not, but suffer him to perish in these anguishes, then it is an assured sign that God has rejected him as a hypocrite, that shall have no portion of his glory. Thus, I say, satan takes occasion to tempt, and moves also others to judge and condemn God's elect and chosen children, by reason that troubles are multiplied upon them.

But with what weapons we ought to fight against such enemies and assaults, we shall learn in the answer of Christ Jesus, which follows: But he, answering, said, " It is written, Man lives not by bread only, but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God." This answer of Christ proves the sentence which we have brought of the aforesaid temptation, to be the very meaning of the Holy Ghost ; for unless the purpose of satan had been to have removed Christ from all hope of God's merciful providence towards him in that his necessity, Christ had not answered directly to his words, saying, " Command that these stones be made bread." But Christ Jesus, perceiving his art and malicious subtilty, answered directly to his meaning, his words nothing regarded ; by which satan was so confounded, that he was ashamed to reply any further.

But that you may the better understand the meaning of Christ's answer, we will express and repeat it over in more words. " Thou labourest, satan," would Christ say, " to bring into my heart a doubt and suspicion of my Father's promise, which was openly proclaimed in my baptism, by reason of my hunger, and that I lack all carnal

provision. Thou art bold to affirm that God takes no care of me, but thou art a deceitful and false corrupt sophister, and thy argument too is vain, and full of blasphemies; for thou bindest God's love, mercy, and providence, to the having or wanting of bodily provision, which no part of God's scriptures teach us, but rather the express contrary. As it is written, 'Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.' That is, the very life and felicity of man consists not in the abundance of bodily things, or, the possession and having of them makes no man blessed or happy; neither shall the lack of them be the cause of his final misery; but the very life of man consists in God, and in his promises pronounced by his own mouth, unto which whoso cleaves unfeignedly, shall live the life everlasting. And although all creatures in earth forsake him, yet shall not his bodily life perish till the time appointed by God approach. For God has means to feed, preserve, and maintain, unknown to man's reason, and contrary to the common course of nature. He fed his people Israel in the desert forty years without the provision of man. He preserved Jonah in the whale's belly; and maintained and kept the bodies of the three children in the furnace of fire. Reason and the natural man could have seen nothing in these cases but destruction and death, and could have judged nothing but that God had cast away the care of these his creatures, and yet his providence was most vigilant towards them in the extremity of their dangers, from which he did so deliver them, and in the midst of them did so assist them, that his glory, which is his mercy and goodness, did more appear and shine after their troubles, than it could have done if they had fallen in them. And therefore I measure not the truth and favour of God, by having or by lacking of bodily necessities, but by the promise which he has made to me. As he himself is immutable so is his word and promise constant, which I believe, and to which I will adhere, and so cleave, whatever can come to the body outwardly."

In this answer of Christ we may perceive what weapons are to be used against our adversary the devil, and how we may confute his arguments, which craftily, and of malice, he makes against God's elect. Christ might have repulsed satan with a word, or by commanding him to silence, as he to whom all power was given in heaven and

earth, but it pleased his mercy to teach us how to use the sword of the Holy Ghost, which is the word of God, in battle against our spiritual enemy. The scripture that Christ brings is written in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. It was spoken by Moses a little before his death, to establish the people in God's merciful providence. For in the same chapter, and in certain others that go before, he reckons the great travail and divers dangers with the extreme necessities that they had sustained in the desert, the space of forty years, and yet, notwithstanding how constant God had been in keeping and performing his promise, for throughout all perils he had conducted them to the sight and borders of the promised land. And so this scripture more directly answers to the temptation of satan; for thus does satan reason, as before is said, "Thou art in poverty and hast no provision to sustain thy life. Therefore God takes no regard nor care of thee, as he doth over his chosen children." Christ Jesus answered, "Thy argument is false and vain; for poverty or necessity precludes not the providence or care of God; which is easy to be proved by the people of God, Israel, who, in the desert, oftentimes lacked things necessary to the sustenance of life, and for lack of the same they grudged and murmured; yet the Lord never cast away the providence and care of them, but according to the word that he had once pronounced, to wit, that they were his peculiar people; and according to the promise made to Abraham, and to them before their departure from Egypt, he still remained their conductor and guide, till he placed them in peaceable possession of the land of Canaan, their great infirmities and manifold transgressions notwithstanding."

Thus are we taught, I say, by Christ Jesus, to repulse satan and his assaults by the word of God, and to apply the examples of his mercies, which he has shown to others before us, to our own souls in the hour of temptation, and in the time of our trouble. For what God doth to one at any time, the same appertains to all that depend upon God and his promises. And, therefore, however we are assaulted by satan, our adversary, within the word of God is armour and weapons sufficient. The chief craft of satan is to trouble those that begin to decline from his obedience, and to declare themselves enemies to iniquity, with divers assaults, the design whereof is always the same, that is, to put variance betwixt them and God, into their conscience,

that they should not repose and rest themselves in his assured promises. And to persuade this, he uses and invents divers arguments. Sometimes he calls the sins of their youth, and which they have committed in the time of blindness, to their remembrance; very often he objects their unthankfulness towards God and present imperfections. By sickness, poverty, tribulations in their household, or by persecution, he can allege that God is angry, and regards them not. Or, by the spiritual cross, which few feel and fewer understand the utility and profit of, he would drive God's children to desperation, and by infinite means more, he goeth about seeking, like a roaring lion, to undermine and destroy our faith. But it is impossible for him to prevail against us, unless we obstinately refuse to use the defence and weapons that God has offered. Yea, I say, that God's elect cannot refuse it, but seek for their Defender when the battle is most strong; for the sobs, groans, and lamentations of such as fight, yea, the fear they have lest they be vanquished, the calling and prayer for continuance, are the undoubted and right seeking of Christ our champion. We refuse not the weapon, although sometimes, by infirmity, we cannot use it as we would. It suffices that your hearts unfeignedly sob for greater strength, for continuance, and for final deliverance by Christ Jesus; that which is wanting in us, his sufficiency doth supply; for it is he that fighteth and overcometh for us. But for bringing of the examples of the scriptures, if God permit, in the end we shall speak more largely when it shall be treated why Christ permitted himself thus to be tempted. Sundry impediments now call me from writing in this matter, but, by God's grace, at convenient leisure I purpose to finish, and to send it to you. I grant the matter that proceeds from me is not worthy of your pain and labour to read it; yet, seeing it is a testimony of my good mind towards you, I doubt not but you will accept it in good part. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant unto you to find favour and mercy of the Judge, whose eyes and knowledge pierce through the secret cogitations of the heart, in the day of temptation, which shall come upon all flesh, according to that mercy which you (illuminated and directed by his Holy Spirit) have showed to the afflicted. Now the God of all comfort and consolation confirm and strengthen you in his power unto the end. Amen.

A

MOST WHOLESOME COUNSEL

How to behave ourselves in the midst of this wicked generation, touching the daily exercise of God's most holy and sacred word.

BY JOHN KNOX.

1556.

In 1556, Knox, who was then in Scotland, received letters from the church of English exiles at Geneva, which stated that they had appointed him to be one of their ministers. He considered it to be his duty to accede to their request, and in July proceeded thither. Previously to his leaving Scotland he gave his brethren such directions as he considered suitable to their circumstances at that time, and wrote the following letter to be circulated amongst such as had heard his preaching.

The state of the protestants in Scotland at that period was very similar to their situation in England, which is thus described by Strype, in his Memorials of the reign of queen Mary :—"When the learned preachers and ministers were most of them burnt or fled, and the flocks left destitute of their faithful pastors, some of the laity, tradesmen, or others, endued with parts and some learning, used in that distress to read the scriptures to the rest in their meetings, and the letters of the martyrs and prisoners, and other good books; also to pray with them, and exhort them to stand fast, and to establish them in the confession of Christ to the death. Such a one was that excellent pious man and confessor, John Careless, who was a weaver of Coventry; and Clement, a wheelwright, who, speaking of the warnings of the preachers that were then dead and had confirmed their sayings with their blood, said thus of himself;—' myself, when I was with you, did with my simple learning and knowledge, the best I could, to call you from those things that will surely bring the wrath of God upon you, except ye repent in time, and turn to the Lord with your whole heart; but how the preachers' warnings and my poor admonitions have been and are regarded, God and you do know.'" Vol. iii. p. 364.

In another place, Strype says, "The course they took in these sad times was the same which the primitive christians did, when they were under their persecutions, namely, prayers and tears. They continued to assemble together even in the hottest times, and in these assemblies sometimes they only prayed together." Vol. iii. p. 215.

A

MOST WHOLESOME COUNSEL.

To his brethren in Scotland, after he had been quiet among them.

The comfort of the Holy Ghost for salutation.

Not so much to instruct you, as to leave with you, dearly beloved brethren, some testimony of my love, I have thought good to communicate with you, in these few lines, my weak counsel, how I would ye should behave yourselves in the midst of this wicked generation, touching the exercise of God's most holy and sacred word, without which neither shall knowledge increase, godliness appear, nor fervency continue among you. For as the word of God is the beginning of spiritual life, without which all flesh is dead in God's presence; and as it is the lantern to our feet, without the brightness whereof all the posterity of Adam walk in darkness; and as it is the foundation of faith, without which no man understands the good will of God, so it is also the only organ and instrument which God uses to strengthen the weak, to comfort the afflicted, to reduce to mercy by repentance such as have slidden, and, finally, to preserve and keep the very life of the soul in all assaults and temptations. Therefore, if that ye desire your knowledge to be increased, your faith to be confirmed, your consciences to be quieted and comforted, or, finally, your soul to be preserved in life, let your exercise be frequent in the law of your Lord God. Despise not that precept which Moses, who, by his own experience, had learned what comfort lies hid within the word of God, gave to the Israelites, saying, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt exercise thy children in them; thou shalt talk of them when thou art at home in thy house, and as thou

walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be papers of remembrance between thy eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." And Moses, in another place, commands them to remember the law of the Lord God, to do it, that it may be well with them, and with their children in the land which the Lord shall give them. Meaning that as frequent memory and repetition of God's precepts is the means whereby the fear of God, which is the beginning of all wisdom and felicity, is kept recent in mind; so is negligence and oblivion of God's benefits received, the first evidence of defection from God.

Now, if the law, which, by reason of our weakness, can work nothing but wrath and anger, was so effectual that, being remembered and rehearsed of purpose to do it, it brought to the people a corporeal benediction; what shall we say that the glorious gospel of Christ Jesus doth work, so that it be with reverence entreated? St. Paul calls it the sweet odour of life unto those that should receive life, borrowing his similitude from odoriferous herbs or precious ointments, whose nature is, the more they are touched or moved, to send forth their odour more pleasing and delectable. Even such, dear brethren, is the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus; for the more it is treated of, the more comfortable and more pleasant is it to such as do hear, read, and exercise the same. I am not ignorant that as the Israelites loathed the manna, because that every day they saw and ate but one thing, so some there are now-a-days, who will not be holden of the worst sort, that, after once reading some parcels of the scripture, do turn themselves altogether to profane authors and human letters, because that the variety of matters therein contained brings with it a daily delectation, where contrariwise, within the simple scriptures of God, the perpetual repetition of a thing is fascheous* and wearisome. This temptation, I confess, may enter into God's very elect for a time, but it is impossible that they continue therein to the end; for God's election, besides other evident signs, hath this ever joined with it, that God's elect are called from ignorance, (I speak of those that are come to the years of knowledge,) to some taste and feeling of God's mercy, of which they are never satisfied in this life, but from time to time they

* Tiresome.

hunger to eat the bread that descended from heaven, and they thirst to drink the water that springeth unto life everlasting, which they cannot do but by the means of faith, and faith looks ever to the will of God revealed by his word. So that faith hath both her beginning and continuance by the word of God; and so I say that it is impossible that God's chosen children can despise or reject the word of their salvation for any long continuance, neither yet loath it to the end.

Often it is that God's elect are holden in such bondage and thraldom, that they cannot have the bread of life broken unto them, neither yet liberty to exercise themselves in God's holy word; but then God's dear children do not loath, but most greedily do they covet, the food of their souls. Then do they accuse their former negligence, then they lament and bewail the miserable affliction of their brethren, and then they cry and call in their hearts, and openly where they dare, for free passage to the gospel. This hunger and thirst doth argue and prove the life of their souls. But if such men as having liberty to read and exercise themselves on God's holy scripture, yet begin to weary because from time to time they read but the same thing; I ask why weary they not also every day to drink wine, to eat bread, every day to behold the brightness of the sun; and so to use the rest of God's creatures, which every day do keep their own substance, course, and nature? They shall answer, I trust, because such creatures have a strength, as oft as they are used, to expel hunger, and quench thirst, to restore strength, and to preserve life. Oh miserable wretches, who dare attribute more power and strength to the corruptible creatures, in nourishing and preserving the mortal carcass, than to the eternal word of God in nourishment of the soul which is immortal! To reason with their abominable unthankfulness at the present it is not my purpose. But to you, dear brethren, I write my knowledge, and do speak my conscience, that so necessary as meat and drink are to the preservation of bodily life, and so necessary as the heat and brightness of the sun are to the quickening of the herbs, and to expel darkness, so necessary also to life everlasting, and to the illumination and light of the soul, are the perpetual meditation, exercise, and use of God's holy word.

And therefore, dear brethren, if ye look for a life to

come, of necessity it is that you exercise yourselves in the book of the Lord your God. Let no day slip over without some comfort received from the mouth of God. Open your ears, and he will ever speak pleasing things to your heart. Close not your eyes, but diligently let them behold what portion of substance is left you within your Father's testament. Let your tongues learn to praise the gracious goodness of Him, who, of his mere mercy, hath called you from darkness to light, and from death to life; neither yet may ye do this so quietly that ye will admit no witnesses. Nay, brethren, ye are ordained of God to rule and govern your own houses in his true fear, and according to his holy word. Within your houses, I say, in some cases ye are bishops and kings; your wives, children, and family are your bishopric and charge; of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God's true knowledge, how you have studied to plant virtue in them, and to repress vice. And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in reading, exhortation, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least. But above all things, dear brethren, study to practise in life that which the Lord commands, and then be ye assured that ye shall never hear nor read the same without fruit. And this much for the exercises within your houses.

Considering that St. Paul calls the congregation the body of Christ, whereof every one of us is a member, teaching us thereby that no member is of sufficiency to sustain and feed himself without the help and support of any other; I think it necessary that for the conference of scripture, assemblies of brethren be had; the order therein to be observed is expressed by St. Paul, and, therefore, I need not to use many words in that behalf, only willing, that when ye convene, which I would were once a week, your beginning should be by confessing of your offences, and invocation of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus to assist you in all your godly enterprises. Then let some place of scripture be plainly and distinctly read, so much as shall be thought sufficient for the day or time; which ended, if any brother have exhortation, interpretation, or doubt, let him not fear to speak and move the same, so that he do it with moderation, either to edify or be edified; and hereof I doubt not but that great profit shall shortly ensue. For, first, by hearing, reading, and conferring the

scriptures in the assembly, the whole body of the scriptures of God shall become familiar, the judgment and spirits of men shall be tried, their patience and modesty shall be known; and, finally, their gifts and utterance shall appear. Multiplication of words, perplexed interpretations, and wilfulness in reasoning, are to be avoided at all times, and in all places, but chiefly in the congregation, where nothing ought to be respected except the glory of God and comfort and edification of our brethren.

If any thing occur within the text, or yet arise in reasoning, which your judgments cannot resolve, or capacities apprehend, let the same be noted and put in writing before you depart the congregation, that when God shall offer unto you any interpreter, your doubts being noted and known, may have the more expeditious resolution; or else that when ye shall have occasion to write to such as with whom ye would communicate your judgments, your letters may signify and declare your unfeigned desire that ye have of God and of his true knowledge; and they, I doubt not, according to their talents, will endeavour and will bestow their faithful labours to satisfy your godly petitions. Of myself I will speak as I think; I will more gladly spend fifteen hours in communicating my judgment with you, in explaining as God pleases to open to me any place of scripture, than half an hour in any other matter beside.

Further, in reading the scriptures I would ye should join some books of the old and some of the new testament together, as Genesis and one of the evangelists, Exodus with another, and so forth; ever ending such books as ye begin, as the time will suffer; for it shall greatly comfort you to hear that harmony and well-tuned song of the Holy Spirit speaking in our fathers from the beginning. It shall confirm you in these dangerous and perilous days to behold the face of Christ Jesus, and his loving spouse and church, from Abel to himself, and from himself to this day, in all ages to be one. Be frequent in the prophets and in the epistles of St. Paul, for the multitude of matters therein contained require exercise and good memory. Like as your assemblies ought to begin with confession and invocation of God's Holy Spirit, so would I that they were never finished without thanksgiving and common prayers for princes, rulers, and magistrates; for the liberty and free passage of Christ's gospel; for the comfort and

deliverance of our afflicted brethren in all places now persecuted, but most cruelly within the realm of France and England; and for such other things as the Spirit of the Lord Jesus shall teach unto you to be profitable, either to yourselves or yet to your brethren wheresoever they are.

If thus or better, dear brethren, I shall hear that ye exercise yourselves, then will I praise God for your great obedience, as for them that not only have received the word of grace with gladness, but that also, with care and diligence, do keep the same as a treasure and most precious jewel. And because I cannot expect you will do the contrary at the present, I will use no threatenings, for my good hope is, that ye shall walk as the sons of light in the midst of this wicked generation; that ye shall be as stars in the night season, which yet are not changed into darkness; that ye shall be as wheat amongst the cockle, and yet that he shall not change your nature which ye have received by grace, through the fellowship and participation which we have with the Lord Jesus in his body and blood. And, finally, that ye shall be of the number of the prudent virgins, daily renewing your lamps with oil, as they that patiently abide the glorious appearance and coming of the Lord Jesus, whose omnipotent Spirit rule and instruct, illuminate and comfort your hearts and minds, in all assaults, now and ever. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus rest with you.

Remember my weakness in your daily prayers.

Your brother unfeigned,

The 7th of July, 1556. JOHN KNOX.

THE

EXHORTATION

OF

JOHN KNOX

TO HIS BELOVED BRETHREN THE COMMONALTY OF SCOTLAND.

A. D. 1558.

During Knox's abode at Geneva, in 1558, he published "The Appellation of John Knox, from the cruel and most unjust sentence pronounced against him by the false bishops and clergy of Scotland, with his Supplication and Exhortation to the Nobility, Estates, and Commonalty of the realm." This tract was written with a design to instruct and animate such of his countrymen as were favourable to the Reformation.

In the former part he urged, that the care and reformation of religion was a duty especially incumbent upon those who were in authority. The nature of its contents renders this supplication to the nobility interesting and valuable as a historical and political document; but it does not appear so well suited for the objects of the present collection as the Exhortation addressed to the Commonalty, which points out their duty and interest respecting the subjects then agitated, shewing that a question in which the welfare of their souls was so deeply interested, required attention from every individual. Knox therein gave a summary of the doctrines he had taught during his last visit to Scotland, for which the Romish clergy had condemned him as a heretic when they learned that he was upon his return to the continent, although they had avoided calling him publicly to judgment while he remained in the country.

THE

EXHORTATION

OF

JOHN KNOX

TO THE COMMONALTY OF SCOTLAND.

To his beloved brethren, the Commonalty of Scotland, John Knox wishes grace, mercy, and peace, with the spirit of righteous judgment.

WHAT I have required of the queen regent, estates, and nobility, as the chief heads for this present of the realm, I cannot cease to require of you, dearly beloved brethren, which are the commonalty and body of the same, namely, That notwithstanding the false and cruel sentence which your disguised bishops have pronounced against me, you would please to be so favourable unto me, as to be impartial auditors of my just purgation ;* which, if God earnestly move your hearts to do, as I nothing doubt but that your enterprise shall redound to the praise and glory of his holy name, so am I assured, that you and your posterity shall by that means receive most singular comfort, edification, and profit. For when ye shall hear the matter debated, you shall easily perceive and understand upon what ground and foundation that religion is built, which amongst you is this day defended by fire and sword.

As for mine own conscience, I am most assuredly persuaded, that whatsoever is used in the papistical church is altogether opposed to Christ's blessed ordinance, and is nothing but mortal venom ;† of which whosoever drinks, I am assuredly persuaded, that therewith he drinks death and damnation, except, by true conversion unto God, he

* Defence. † Poison.

be purged from the same. But because that long silence of God's word has begotten ignorance in almost all sorts of men, and ignorance, joined with long custom, has confirmed superstition in the hearts of many; I therefore, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, desire audience, as well of you the commonalty my brethren, as of the estates and nobility of the realm, that in public preaching I may have place amongst you, at large to utter my mind in all matters of controversy this day in religion. And further I desire, that ye, concurring with your nobility, would compel your bishops and clergy to cease their tyranny. And also, that, for the better assurance and instruction of your conscience, you would compel your said bishops and false teachers, to answer by the scriptures of God, to such objections and crimes as shall be laid against their vain religion, false doctrine, wicked life, and slanderous conversation.

Here I know it will be objected, That I require of you a thing most unreasonable, namely, that you should call your religion* in doubt, which has been approved and established by so long continuance, and by the consent of so many men before you. But I shortly answer, That neither the long continuance of time, nor yet the multitude of men, is a sufficient approbation, which God will allow for our religion. For as some of the most ancient writers do witness, neither long process of time can justify an error; nor can the multitude of such as follow it change the nature of the same; but if it were an error in the beginning, so is it in the end; and the longer it is followed, and the more that receive it, it is the more pestilent, and more to be avoided. For if antiquity or multitude of men could justify any religion, then was the idolatry of the Gentiles, and now is the abomination of the Turks, good religion; for antiquity approved the one, and a multitude has received, and defends the other. But to answer otherwise—Godly men may wonder, from what fountain such a sentence proceeds—that no man ought to try his faith and religion by God's word, but that he safely may believe and follow every thing which antiquity and a multitude have approved. The Spirit of God teaches us otherwise; for the Wisdom of God, Christ Jesus himself, referred his adversaries to Moses and the scriptures, to try by them whether his doctrine were of God or not. The apostles

* The Romish religion.

Paul and Peter command men to try the religion which they profess by God's plain scriptures, and praise men for so doing. St. John strictly commands, that we believe not every spirit, but willeth us to try the spirits, whether they be of God or not.

Now, seeing that these evident testimonies of the Holy Ghost direct us to try our faith and religion by the plain word of God, it is wonderful, that the papists will not be content that their religion and doctrine come under the trial of the same. If this sentence of Christ be true (as it is most true, seeing it springeth from the verity itself,) "Whoso doth evil hateth the light, neither will he come to the light, lest that his evil works be manifested and rebuked;" then do our papists, by their own sentence, condemn themselves and their religion; for in so far as they refuse examination and trial, they declare, that they know some fault which the light will utter; which is a cause of their fear, and why they claim the privilege, that no man dispute of their religion. Verity and truth being of the nature of fine purified gold, do not fear the trial of the furnace; but the stubble and chaff of man's inventions, and such is their religion, may not abide the flame of fire.

True it is, that Mahomet pronounced this sentence, That no man should, on pain of death, dispute or reason of the ground of his religion, which law, to this day, by the art of satan, is observed amongst the Turks, to their mortal blindness, and horrible blaspheming of Christ Jesus, and of his true religion: and from Mahomet (or rather from satan the father of all lies) the pope, and his rabble, have learned this lesson; namely, That their religion should not be disputed upon, but what the fathers have believed, that ought and must the children approve: and, in so devising, satan lacked not his foresight; for no one thing has more established the kingdom of that Roman antichrist than this most wicked decree, namely, That no man be permitted to reason of his power, or to call his laws in doubt. This is most assured, that whenever the papistical religion shall come to examination, it will be found to have no other ground than the religion of Mahomet has, namely, man's inventions, devices, and dreams, over-shadowed with some colour of God's word. Therefore, brethren, seeing that religion is to man as the stomach to the body, which, if it be corrupted, infects the whole members, it is necessary that the same be examined; and if it

be found replenished with pestilent humours, I mean with the fancies of men, then of necessity it is that those be purged, else shall your bodies and souls perish for ever: for of this I would you were most certainly persuaded, that a corrupt religion defiles the whole life of man, though it appear ever so holy.

Neither would I that you should esteem the reformation and care of religion less to appertain to you, because you are not kings, rulers, judges, nobles, nor in authority. Beloved brethren, you are God's creatures, created and formed in his own image and similitude, for whose redemption the most precious blood of the only beloved Son of God was shed, to whom he has commanded his gospel and glad tidings to be preached, and for whom he has prepared the heavenly inheritance, so that you will not obstinately refuse, and disdainfully contemn the means which he has appointed to obtain the same, namely, his blessed gospel, which now he offers unto you, to the end that ye may be saved. For the gospel and glad tidings of the kingdom truly preached, is the power of God to the salvation of every believer, which to credit and receive, you the commonalty are no less addebted* than your rulers and princes are; for albeit God hath put and ordained distinction and difference betwixt the king and subjects, betwixt the rulers and the common people, in the government and administration of civil policies, yet in the hope of the life to come he has made all equal. For as in Christ Jesus the Jew has no greater prerogative than the Gentile, the man than the woman, the learned than the unlearned, the lord than the servant, but all are one in him; so there is but one way and means to attain to the participation of his benefits and spiritual graces, which is, a lively faith, working by charity.†

And therefore I say, that it no less appertains to you, beloved brethren, to be assured, that your faith and religion are grounded and established upon the true and undoubted word of God, than to your princes or rulers. For as your bodies cannot escape corporeal death, if with your princes you eat or drink deadly poison, although it be by ignorance or negligence, so shall you not escape the everlasting death, if with them you profess a corrupt religion. Yea, except in heart you believe, and with mouth you confess the Lord Jesus to be the only Saviour of the world,

* Obliged. † Love.

which you cannot do except you embrace his gospel offered, you cannot escape death and damnation; for as the just liveth by his own faith, so doth the unfaithful perish by his infidelity.* And as true faith is engendered, nourished, and maintained, in the hearts of God's elect, by Christ's gospel truly preached; so is infidelity and unbelief fostered by concealing and repressing the same. And thus, if you look for the life everlasting, you must try if you stand in the faith; and if you would be assured of a true and lively faith, you must needs have Christ Jesus truly preached unto you.

And this is the cause, dear brethren, that so oft I repeat, and so constantly I affirm, that to you it no less appertains, than to your king or princes, to provide that Christ Jesus be truly preached amongst you, seeing that without his true knowledge neither of you can attain to salvation. And this is the point wherein I say all men are equal, "That as all are descended from Adam, by whose sin and disobedience death entered into the world, so it behoves all that shall obtain life, to be ingrafted in one; that is, in the Lord Jesus, who, being the just servant, doth by his knowledge justify many; namely, all that unfeignedly believe in him."

Of this equality, and that God requires no less of the subject, be he ever so poor, than of the prince and rich man, in matters of religion, he has given an evident declaration in the law of Moses. For when the tabernacle was built, erected, and set in order, God did provide, how it, and the things pertaining to the same, should be sustained, so that they should not fall into decay. And this provision, albeit heaven and earth obey his empire, he would not take from the secret and hid treasures which lie dispersed in the veins of the earth, neither yet would he take it from the rich and potent of the people; but he commanded that every one of the sons of Israel, were he rich, or were he poor, from twenty years and upward, should yearly pay half a shekel for an oblation to the Lord, in remembrance of their redemption, and for an expiation or cleansing of their souls: which money God commanded should be bestowed upon the ornaments and necessaries of the tabernacle of testimony. He furthermore added a precept, that the rich should give no more for that use, and in that behalf, than should the poor; neither yet

* Unbelief.

that the poor should give any less than the rich should in that consideration.

This law, to man's reason and judgment, may appear very unreasonable; for some rich man might have given a thousand shekels with less hurt of his substance, than some poor man might have paid the half-shekel: and yet God makes all equal, and wills that the one shall pay no more than the other, neither yet the poor any less than the rich. This law, I say, may appear very unequal: but if the cause which God added be observed, we shall find in the same the great mercy and inestimable wisdom of God to appear; which cause is expressed in these words: "This money received from the children of Israel, thou shalt give in for the service of the tabernacle, that it may be to the children of Israel for a remembrance before the Lord, that he may be merciful to your souls." This cause, I say, evidently declares, that as the whole multitude was delivered from the bondage of Egypt, by the mighty power of God alone; so was every member of the same, without respect of persons, sanctified by his grace, the richest, in that behalf, nothing preferred to the poorest: for by no merit and worthiness of man was he moved to choose and to establish his habitation and dwelling amongst them; but their felicity, prerogative, and honour, which they had above all other nations, proceeded only from the fountain of his eternal goodness, who loved them freely, as he freely had chosen them to be his priestly kingdom, and holy people, from all nations of the earth. Thus to honour them, that he would dwell in the midst of them, he neither was moved, I say, by the wisdom of the wise, by the riches of the potent, neither yet by the virtue and holiness of any state amongst them, but of mere goodness did he love them, and with his presence did he honour that whole people; and therefore, to point out the same, his common love to the whole multitude, and to cut off occasions of contention, and doubts of conscience, he would receive no more from the rich than from the poor, for the maintenance of his tabernacle, by which was represented his presence and habitation amongst them.

If the rich had been preferred to the poor, then as the one should have been puffed up with pride, as though he had been more acceptable to God, by reason of his greater gift; so should the conscience of the other have been troubled and wounded, thinking that his poverty was an

impediment, that he could not stand in such perfect favour with God as did the other, because he was not able to give so much as did the rich to the maintenance of his tabernacle. But He, who of mercy, as is said, chose his habitation amongst them, and also who best knows what lieth within man, provided the remedy for the one, and for the other, making them equal in that behalf, who in other things were most unequal. If the poor should have found himself grieved by reason of that tax, and that as much was imposed upon him as upon the rich, yet he had no small cause of joy, that God himself would please to compare him, and to make him equal, in the maintenance of his tabernacle, to the most rich and potent in Israel.

If this equality were commanded by God, for maintenance of that transitory tabernacle, which was but a shadow of a better to come, is not the same required of us, who now have the Verity, which is Christ Jesus? who being clad with our nature, is made "Immanuel, that is, God with us; whose natural body, although it be received into the heavens, where he must abide till all be complete that is forespoken by the prophets, yet hath he promised to be present with us to the end of the world." And for that purpose, and for the greater assurance of his promise, he has erected among us, here in the earth, the signs of his own presence with us, his spiritual tabernacle, the true preaching of his word, and right administration of his sacraments; to the maintenance whereof the subject is no less bound than the prince, the poor than the rich: for as the price which was given for man's redemption is one, so God requires of all that shall be partakers of the benefits of the same a like duty; which is a plain confession, that by Christ Jesus alone we have received whatsoever was lost in Adam.

Of the prince God requires, That he deny himself, and that he follow Jesus Christ—of the subject he requires the same. Of the kings and judges it is required, "That they kiss the Son;" (Psalm ii.) that is, give honour, subjection, and obedience to him: and from such reverence God does not exempt the subject that shall be saved. And this is that equality which is betwixt the kings and subjects, the most rich or noble, and betwixt the poorest and men of lowest estate; namely, That as the one is obliged to believe in heart, and with mouth to confess the Lord Jesus to be the only Saviour of the world, so also is the other.

Neither is there any of God's children, who has attained to the years of discretion, so poor, but that he has thus much to bestow upon the ornaments and maintenance of their spiritual tabernacle, when necessity requires; neither yet is there any so rich, of whose hands God requires any more. For albeit that David gathered great substance for the building of the temple—that Solomon, with earnest diligence, and incredible expences, erected and finished the same—that Hezekiah and Josiah purged the religion, which before was corrupted; yet to them was God no further debtor, in that respect, than he was to the most simple of the faithful posterity of faithful Abraham. For their diligence, zeal, and works, gave rather testimony and confession before men, what honour they did bear to God, what love to his word, and reverence to his religion, than that any work proceeding from them either established or increased God's favour towards them, who freely loved them, in Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world was laid: so that these fore-named, by their notable works, gave testimony of their unfeigned faith; and the same does the poorest who unfeignedly and openly professes Christ Jesus, and embraces his glad tidings offered, who abhors superstition, and flees from idolatry.

The poorest, I say, and most simple, who this day on earth, in the days of this cruel persecution, firmly believes in Christ, and boldly confesses him before this wicked generation, is no less acceptable before God, neither is judged in his presence to have done any less in promoting Christ's cause, than the king, who by the sword and power, which he has received of God, roots out idolatry, and so advances Christ's glory. But to return to our former purpose; It is no less required, I say, of the subject to believe in Christ, and to profess his true religion, than of the prince and king: and therefore I affirm, That in God's presence it shall not excuse you to allege, that ye were not chief rulers, and therefore that the care and reformation of religion did not appertain unto you.

Dear brethren, as before is said, ye are the creatures of God, created after his own image and similitude; to whom it is commanded, to hear the voice of your heavenly Father, to embrace his Son Christ Jesus, to flee from all doctrine and religion which he has not approved by his own will, revealed to us in his most blessed word. To which precepts and charges if you be found disobedient,

you shall perish in your iniquity, as rebels and stubborn servants, who have no pleasure to obey the good will of their sovereign Lord, who most lovingly calls for your obedience: and therefore, brethren, in this behalf, it is your part to be careful and diligent. For the question is not of things temporal, which, although they be endangered, yet by diligence and in process of time may afterwards be redressed; but it is of the damnation of your bodies and souls, and of the loss of life everlasting, which once lost can never be recovered: and therefore, I say, that it behoves you to be careful and diligent in this so weighty a matter, lest that you contemning this occasion, which God now offers, find not the like, although that afterwards with groaning and sobs you languish for the same. And that you be not ignorant of what occasion I mean, in few words I shall express it.

Not only I, but with me also divers godly and learned men, offer unto you our labours, faithfully to instruct you in the ways of the Eternal, our God, and in the sincerity of Christ's gospel, which this day, by the pestilent generation of antichrist, I mean, by the pope, and by his most ungodly clergy, are almost hid from the eyes of men. We offer to jeopard our lives for the salvation of your souls, and by manifest scriptures to prove that the religion, which is maintained amongst you by fire and sword, is false, vain, and diabolical. We require nothing of you, but that patiently you will hear our doctrine, which is not ours, but the doctrine of salvation revealed to the world by the only Son of God; and that you will examine our reasons, by which we offer to prove the papistical religion to be abominable before God: and lastly, we require, that by your power the tyranny of those cruel beasts, I mean, of priests and friars, may be bridled, till we have uttered our minds in all matters this day debatable in religion. If these things, in the fear of God, ye grant to me and unto others, who unfeignedly, for your salvation, and for God's glory, require the same, I am assured, that ye shall be blessed of God, whatsoever satan shall devise against you. But if ye contemn or refuse God, who thus lovingly offers unto you salvation and life, ye shall neither escape plagues temporal, which shortly shall apprehend you; neither yet the torment prepared for the devil and for his angels; except by speedy repentance ye return to the Lord, whom ye now refuse, if ye refuse the messengers of his word.

But yet I think ye doubt what ye ought, and may do, in this so weighty a matter. In few words I will declare my conscience in the one and in the other. Ye ought to prefer the glory of God, the promoting of Christ's gospel, and the salvation of your souls, to all things that are in the earth: and although you are but subjects, you may lawfully require of your superiors, be it of your king, be it of your lords, rulers, and powers, that they provide for you true preachers; and that they expel such as, under the name of pastors, devour and destroy the flock, not feeding the same as Christ Jesus hath commanded: and if in this point your superiors be negligent, or yet pretend to maintain tyrants in their tyranny, most justly you may provide true teachers for yourselves, pastors according to the mind and heart of God, by whom you may be fed with that most comfortable food of your souls, Christ's gospel truly preached. You may moreover, in a peaceable manner, without sedition, withhold the fruits and profits which your false bishops and clergy most unjustly receive of you,* unto such time as they shall faithfully do their charge and duties; which is, to preach unto you Christ Jesus truly, rightly to minister the sacraments according to his own institution, and so to watch for the salvation of your souls, as is commanded by Christ Jesus himself, and by his apostles Paul and Peter.

If God shall move your hearts in his true fear, to begin to practise these things, and to demand and crave the same of your superiors, which most lawfully ye may do, then I doubt not but, of his great mercy and free grace, he will illuminate the eyes of your minds, that his undoubted verity will be a lantern to your feet, to guide and lead you in all the ways which godly wisdom doth approve. He will make your enemies tremble before your face; he will establish his gospel amongst you, to the salvation and perpetual comfort of yourselves, and of your posterity after you. But if, as God forbid, the love of friends, the fear of your princes, and the wisdom of the world, draw you back from God, and from his Son Christ Jesus, be certainly persuaded, that ye shall drink the cup of his vengeance; so many, I mean, as shall contemn and despise this loving calling of your heavenly Father.

It will not excuse you, dear brethren, in the presence of

* The voluntary, or rather involuntary, offerings required by the Romish clergy at certain festivals and on other occasions.

God, neither yet will it avail you in the day of his visitation, to say, "We were but simple subjects; we could not redress the faults and crimes of our rulers, bishops, and clergy; we called for reformation, and wished for the same: but lords brethren were bishops, their sons were abbots, and the friends of great men had the possession of the church, and so we were compelled to give obedience to all that they demanded." These vain excuses, I say, will nothing avail you in the presence of God, who requires no less of the subjects than of their rulers, that they decline from evil, and that they do good; that they abstain from idolatry, superstition, blasphemy, murder, and other such horrible crimes, which his law forbids, and yet nevertheless are openly committed and maliciously defended in that miserable realm.

And if you think that you are innocent, because you are not the chief actors of such iniquity, you are utterly deceived; for God not only punishes the chief offenders, but with them he also condemns the consenters to such iniquity; and all are judged to consent, who, knowing that impiety is committed, give no testimony that the same displeases them. To speak this matter more plainly—As your princes and rulers are criminal,* with your bishops, of all idolatry committed, and of all the innocent blood that is shed for the testimony of Christ's truth, and that because they maintain them in their tyranny; so are you, I mean so many of you as give no plain confession to the contrary, criminal and guilty of the same crimes with your princes and rulers, because you assist and maintain your princes in their blind rage, and give no declaration that their tyranny displeases you.

This doctrine, I know, is strange to the blind world; but the verity of it has been declared in all notable punishments from the beginning. When the original world perished by water; when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire; and, finally, when Jerusalem was horribly destroyed; does any man think that all were alike wicked before the world? Evident it is that they were not, if they be judged according to their external facts:† for some were young, and could not be oppressors, neither yet could defile themselves with unnatural and beastly lusts; some were pitiful and gentle of nature, and did not thirst for the blood of Christ, nor of his apostles. But did any

* Guilty. † Outward actions.

escape the plagues and vengeance which did apprehend the multitude? Let the scriptures witness, and the histories be considered, which plainly do testify, that by the waters all flesh in earth at that time did perish, Noah and his family excepted; that none escaped in Sodom, and in the other cities adjacent, except Lot and his two daughters. And evident it is, that in the famous city Jerusalem, in the last and horrible destruction of the same, none escaped God's vengeance, except so many as before were dispersed.

And what is the cause of this severity, seeing that all were not alike offenders? Let the flesh cease to dispute with God, and let all men, by these examples, learn betimes to flee and avoid the society and company of the proud contemners of God, if that they list not to be partakers of their plagues. The cause is evident, if we can be subject to God's judgments without grudging, which in themselves are most holy and just; for in the original world none was found that either did resist the tyranny and oppression that universally were used, nor yet that earnestly reprehended the same. In Sodom none were found who did gainstand * that furious and beastly multitude, which compassed about and besieged the house of Lot; none would believe Lot, that the city should be destroyed. And, finally, in Jerusalem none were found that studied to repress the tyranny of the priests, who were conjured † against Christ and his gospel; but all fainted,—I except such as gave witness with their blood, or their fleeing, that such impiety displeased them,—all kept silence; by which all approved iniquity, and joined hands with the tyrants, and so were all arrayed and set, as it had been in one battle, against the Omnipotent, and against his Son Jesus Christ: for whosoever gathereth not with Christ in the day of his harvest is judged to scatter; and therefore they were all partakers of one vengeance temporal.

Which thing, as before I have touched, ought to move you to the deep consideration of your duties in these last and most perilous times. The iniquity of your bishops is more than manifest; their filthy lives infect the air; the innocent blood which they shed cries for vengeance in the ears of our God; the idolatry and abomination, which they openly commit, and without punishment maintain, doth corrupt and defile the whole land, and none amongst you doth unfeignedly study for any redress of such enormities.

* Object to, or oppose. † Bound together.

Will God in this behalf hold you as innocents? Be not deceived, dear brethren; God hath punished not only the proud tyrants, filthy persons, and cruel murderers, but also such as with them did draw the yoke of iniquity, whether by flattering their offences, obeying their unjust commandments, or in winking at their manifest iniquity: all such, I say, God once punished with the chief offenders. Be assured, brethren, that, as He is immutable of nature, so he will not pardon you in that which he has punished so severely in others; and now the less, because he has plainly admonished you of the dangers to come, and has offered you his mercy before he pour forth his wrath and displeasure upon the disobedient.

God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Father of glory, and God of all consolation, give you the Spirit of wisdom, and open unto you the knowledge of himself, by the means of his dear Son, by which you may attain to the esperance* and hope, that, after the troubles of this transitory life, you may be partakers of the riches of that glorious inheritance, which is prepared for such as refuse† themselves, and fight under the banner of Christ Jesus in the day of this his battle: that in deep consideration of the same you may learn to prefer the invisible and eternal joys to the vain pleasures that are present. God further grant you his Holy Spirit, rightly to consider what I, in his name, have required of your nobility, and of you the subjects, and move you all together so to answer, that my petition be not a testimony of your just condemnation, when the Lord Jesus shall appear to avenge the blood of his saints, and the contempt of his most holy word. Amen.

"Sleep not in sin, for vengeance is prepared against all disobedient. Flee from Babylon, if ye will not be partakers of her plagues."

Be witness to my Appellation. Grace be with you.

From Geneva, the 14th
of July, 1558.

Your brother to command in godliness,

JOHN KNOX.

* Expectation. † Deny.

The martyrdom of the blessed servant of God, Walter Mill.

The following account of the martyrdom of Walter Mill, who was burned by the papists at St. Andrews, *not* three months previously to the writing of the foregoing Appellation, is a sufficient comment upon it.

Among the rest of the martyrs of Scotland, the marvellous constancy of Walter Mill is not to be passed over in silence. Out of whose ashes sprang thousands of his opinion and religion in Scotland, who altogether chose rather to die than to be any longer overtrodden by the tyranny of the Romish ecclesiastics, and so began the congregation of Scotland to debate the true religion of Christ.

In the year of our Lord 1558, in the time of Mary, queen regent of Scotland, John Hamilton being bishop of St. Andrew's, and primate of Scotland, Walter Mill, who in his youth had been a papist, after that he had been in Germany, and had heard the doctrine of the gospel, returned again into Scotland, and, setting aside all papistry and compelled chastity, married a wife, which thing made him to be suspected of heresy by the bishops of Scotland.

After long watching of him he was taken by two popish priests, one called sir George Straquhen, and the other sir Hugh Turry,* servants to the said bishop for the time, within the town of Dysart in Fife, and brought to St. Andrew's and imprisoned in the castle thereof. He being in prison, the papists earnestly laboured to seduce him, and threatened him with death and corporal torments, to the intent they would cause him to recant and forsake the truth. But seeing they could profit nothing thereby, and that he remained still firm and constant, they laboured to persuade him by fair promises, and offered unto him a monk's portion for all the days of his life in the abbey of Dunfermeline, if that he would deny the things he had

* The appellation of "sir" was usually given to the Romish priests.

taught, and grant that they were heresy; but he, continuing in the truth even unto the end, despised their threatenings and fair promises.

Then assembled together many of the Romish prelates and ecclesiastics, with divers others, as sundry friars black and grey. These being assembled, and having consulted together, Mill was taken out of prison, and brought to the cathedral, where he was put in a pulpit before the bishops to be accused, the twentieth day of April. Being brought into the church, and climbing up to the pulpit, they, seeing him so weak and feeble of person, partly by age and travail, and partly by evil treatment, that without help he could not climb up, supposed that they should not have heard him for weakness of voice. But when he began to speak he made the church to ring and sound again, with so great courage and stoutness, that the christians who were present were no less rejoiced, than the adversaries were confounded and ashamed. He being in the pulpit, and on his knees at prayer, sir Andrew Oliphant, one of the bishop's priests, commanded him to arise and to answer to his articles, saying on this manner,—"Sir Walter Mill, arise and answer to the articles, for you hold my lord here over long." To whom Walter, after he had finished his prayer, answered, saying, "We ought to obey God more than men; I serve one more mighty, even the omnipotent Lord: and where you call me sir Walter, they call me Walter and not sir Walter. I have been overlong one of the pope's knights. Now say what thou hast to say."

Oliphant. What think you of priests' marriage?

Mill. I hold it a blessed band; for Christ himself maintained it, and approved the same, and also made it free to all men, but ye think it not free to you; ye abhor it, and in the mean time take other men's wives and daughters, and will not keep the band that God hath made. Ye vow chastity, and break the same. St. Paul had rather marry than burn; the which I have done: for God never forbad marriage to any man, of what state or degree so ever he were.

O. Thou sayest there are not seven sacraments.

M. Give me the Lord's Supper and baptism, and take you the rest, and part them among you. For if there be seven, why have you omitted one of them, to wit, marriage, and give yourselves to slanderous and ungodly whoredom?

O. Thou art against the blessed sacrament of the altar, and sayest, that the mass is wrong, and is idolatry.

M. Suppose that a lord or a king sent and called many to a dinner, and when the dinner is in readiness he caused to ring a bell, and the men come to the hall, and sit down to be partakers of the dinner, but the lord, turning his back unto them, ate all himself, and mocked them; so do ye.

O. Thou deniest the sacrament of the altar to be the very body of Christ really in flesh and blood.

M. The scripture of God is not to be taken carnally but spiritually, and standeth in faith only. And as for the mass, it is wrong, for Christ was once offered on the cross for man's trespass, and will never be offered again, for then he ended all sacrifice.

O. Thou deniest the office of a bishop.

M. I affirm that they whom ye call bishops do no bishop's works, nor use the office of bishops, as Paul biddeth, writing to Timothy; but live after their own sensual pleasure, and take no care of the flock, nor yet regard they the word of God, but desire to be honoured, and called my lords.

O. Thou speakest against pilgrimage, and callest it a pilgrimage to harlotry.

M. I affirm that, and say that it is not commanded in the scripture, and that there is no greater harlotry in any places than at your pilgrimages, except it be in common brothels.

O. Thou preachest secretly and privately in houses, and openly in the fields.

M. Yea, man, and on the sea; also, sailing in ship.

O. Wilt thou not recant thy erroneous opinions? and if thou wilt not, I will pronounce sentence against thee.

M. I am accused of my life: I know I must die once, and therefore, as Christ said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly." Ye shall know that I will not recant the truth, for I am corn, I am no chaff, I will not be blown away with the wind, nor burst with the flail, but I will abide both.

These things rehearsed they of purpose, with other light trifles, to augment their final accusation, and then sir Andrew Oliphant pronounced sentence, that he should be delivered to the temporal judge, and punished as a heretic, which was to be burnt. Notwithstanding, his

boldness and constancy moved so the hearts of many, that the bishop's steward of his regality, provost of the town, called Patrick Learmond, refused to be his temporal judge; to whom it appertained if the cause had been just. Also the bishop's chamberlain, being therewith charged, would in no wise take upon him so ungodly an office. Yea, the whole town was so offended with his unjust condemnation, that the bishop's servants could not get for their money so much as one cord to tie him to the stake, or a tar barrel to burn him, but were constrained to cut the cords of their master's own pavilion to serve their turn.

Nevertheless, one servant of the bishop, more ignorant and cruel than the rest, called Alexander Simmerwail, enterprising the office of a temporal judge in that part, conveyed him to the fire, where, against all natural reason of man, his boldness and hardiness did more and more increase; so that the Spirit of God working miraculously in him, made it manifest to the people that his cause and articles were just, and he innocently put down.

Now when all things were ready for his death, and he conveyed with armed men to the fire, Oliphant bade him pass to the stake; and he said, "Nay, but wilt thou put me up with thy hand and take part of my death; thou shalt see me pass up gladly, for by the law of God I am forbidden to put hands upon myself." Then Oliphant put him up with his hand, and he ascended gladly, saying, "I go up to the altar of God;" and desired that he might have space to speak to the people, the which Oliphant and other of the burners denied, saying that he had spoken overmuch, for the bishops were altogether offended that the matter was so long continued. Then some of the young men said, that they believed the burners and the bishops their masters should lament that day, and desired the said Walter to speak what he pleased.

And so after he had made his humble supplication to God on his knees, he arose, and standing upon the coals, spake thus: "Dear friends, the cause why I suffer this day is not for any crime laid to my charge, albeit I be a miserable sinner before God, but only for the defence of the faith of Jesus Christ set forth in the New and Old Testament unto us, for which, as the faithful martyrs have offered themselves gladly before, being assured after the death of their bodies of eternal felicity, so this day I praise God that he hath called me of his mercy among the rest

of his servants, to seal up his truth with my life; which as I have received it of him, so willingly I offer it to his glory. Therefore as you will escape eternal death, be no more seduced with the lies of priests, monks, friars, priors, abbots, bishops, and the rest of the sect of antichrist, but depend only upon Jesus Christ and his mercy, that ye may be delivered from condemnation."

The multitude that looked on made a great lamentation, for they were exceedingly moved with his words. When the fire was kindled and began to flame, he cried, "Lord have mercy on me, pray, good people, while there is time;" and thus departed, showing a wonderful courage and resolution of spirit. The citizens took his death so grievously, that lest it should be forgotten, they made up a great heap of stones in the place where he was burned; and when the priests had caused the heap twice or thrice to be carried away, denouncing a curse upon such as should bring any stones thither, still it was renewed, until a watch was set to see who brought stones to the place, and to apprehend them.

Walter Mill was the last martyr that died in Scotland for religion, at the time of the Reformation; and his death was the death of popery in the realm, for it much tended to excite the subsequent proceedings of the protestants against the persecuting tyranny of the Romish prelates.—See *Fox's Acts and Monuments, and Spottiswood's History.*

THE

CONFESSION

OF

FAITH AND DOCTRINE,

PROFESSED AND BELIEVED BY THE PROTESTANTS WITHIN THE REALM OF SCOTLAND.

Published by them in parliament, and by the estates thereof ratified and approved as wholesome and sound doctrine, grounded upon the infallible truth of God.

MATTHEW XXIV.

And these glad tidings of the kingdom shall be preached through the whole world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.

A. D. 1560.

THE parliament of Scotland having met in August, 1560, a petition was presented "In the name of the barons, gentlemen, burgesses, and other subjects of the realm professing the Lord Jesus within the same." In this petition they prayed, 1. That the Romish doctrines might be abolished; 2. That the true discipline of the ancient church might be revived and restored; 3. That the usurped authority of the papacy might be done away, and that the ecclesiastical revenues might be applied to the proper support of the ministry, the instruction of youth, and the relief of the poor. This supplication being read in the parliament, the principal ministers were desired to exhibit, under proper heads, a summary of the doctrines they would maintain as the truth. They readily undertook to do so, and being prepared for such a work, on the fourth day following, which was the 17th of August, they presented a Confession of faith and doctrine, which, upon all the principal points, agreed with the Confessions of the other reformed churches, as shown in the Harmony of the Confessions. It is supposed to have been drawn up principally by Knox.—*See Knox and Calderwood's Histories.*

PREFACE.

The estates of Scotland, with the inhabitants of the same, professing the holy gospel of Christ Jesus, to their natural countrymen, and unto all other realms and nations professing the same Lord Jesus with them, wish grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Spirit of righteous judgment for salvation.

Long have we thirsted, dear brethren, to have notified unto the world the sum of that doctrine which we profess, and for the which we have sustained infamy and danger; but such hath been the rage of satan against us, and against the eternal verity of Christ Jesus, lately now again born amongst us, that to this day no time hath been granted unto us to clear our consciences, as most gladly we would have done; for how we have been tossed a whole year past, the most part of Europe, as we do suppose, doth understand. But seeing that of the infinite goodness of our God, who never suffereth his afflicted utterly to be confounded, above expectation, we have obtained some rest and liberty, we could not but set forth this brief and plain confession of such doctrine as is proposed unto us, and as we believe and profess; partly for satisfaction of our brethren, whose hearts, we doubt not, have been, and yet are, wounded by the despiteful railing of such as yet have not learned to speak well; and partly for stopping the mouths of impudent blasphemers, who boldly condemn that which they have neither heard nor understood: not that we judge that the cankered malice of such is able to be cured by this simple confession; no, we know that the sweet savour of the gospel is, and shall be, death unto the sons of perdition. But we have chief respect to our weak and infirm brethren, to whom we would communicate the bottom of our hearts, lest that they be troubled or carried away by diversity of rumours which satan spreadeth against

us, to the defeating of this our most godly enterprise; protesting, That if any man will note in this our confession any article or sentence repugning* to God's holy word, that it would please him of his gentleness, and for christian charity's sake, to admonish us of the same in writing; and we, upon our honour and fidelity, do promise unto him satisfaction from the mouth of God, that is, from his holy scriptures, or else reformation of that which he shall prove to be amiss. For we take God to record in our consciences, that from our hearts we abhor all sects of heresy, and all teachers of erroneous doctrine; and that with all humility we embrace the purity of Christ's gospel, which is the only food of our souls; and, therefore, so precious unto us, that we are determined to suffer the extremest of worldly danger rather than that we will suffer ourselves to be defrauded of the same. For hereof we are most certainly persuaded—that whosoever denieth Christ Jesus, or is ashamed of him in presence of men, shall be denied before the Father, and before his holy angels; and, therefore, by the assistance of the mighty Spirit of the same Lord Jesus Christ, we firmly purpose to abide to the end in the confession of this our faith.

* Opposed to.

THE

CONFESSION

OF

FAITH AND DOCTRINE

BELIEVED AND PROFESSED BY THE PROTESTANTS OF SCOTLAND.

I. *Of God.*

We confess and acknowledge one only God, to whom only we must cleave, whom only we must serve, whom only we must worship, and in whom only we must put our trust; who is eternal, infinite, unmeasurable, incomprehensible, omnipotent, invisible, one in substance, and yet distinct into three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; by whom we confess and believe all things in heaven and earth, as well visible as invisible, to have been created, to be retained in their being, and to be ruled and guided by his inscrutable providence, to such end as his eternal wisdom, goodness, and justice hath appointed them, to the manifestation of his own glory.

II. *Of the Creation of Man.*

We confess and acknowledge this our God to have created man, namely, our first father Adam, of whom also God formed the woman, to his own image and similitude; to whom he gave wisdom, lordship, justice, freewill, and clear knowledge of himself, so that in the whole nature of man there could be noted no imperfection. From which honour and perfection man and woman did both fall; the woman being deceived by the serpent, and man obeying the voice of the woman, both conspiring against the sovereign majesty of God, who in express words had before threatened death, if they presumed to eat of the forbidden tree.

III. *Of Original Sin.*

By which transgression, commonly called Original Sin, the image of God was utterly defaced in man, and he and

his posterity of nature became enemies to God, slaves to satan, servants to sin, insomuch that death everlasting hath had, and shall have, power and dominion over all that have not been, are not, or shall not be, regenerated from above; which regeneration is wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, working in the hearts of the elect of God, an assured faith in the promises of God, revealed to us in his word; by which faith they apprehend Christ Jesus, with the graces and benefits promised in him.

IV. *Of the Revelation of the Promise.*

For this we constantly believe, That God, after the fearful and horrible defection of man from his obedience, did seek Adam again, call upon him, rebuke his sin, convince him of the same, and in the end made unto him a most joyful promise, "That the seed of the woman should break down the serpent's head;" that is, He should destroy the works of the devil: which promise, as it was repeated and made more clear from time to time, so was it embraced with joy, and most constantly retained of all the faithful, from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, and from Abraham to David, and so forth to the incarnation of Jesus Christ; who all, we mean the faithful fathers under the law, did see the joyful day of Christ Jesus, and did rejoice.

V. *The continuance, increase, and preservation of the Church.*

We most constantly believe, That God preserved, instructed, multiplied, honoured, decored,* and from death called to life, his church in all ages, from Adam till the coming of Christ Jesus in the flesh. For he called Abraham from his father's country: him he instructed, his seed he multiplied, the same he marvellously preserved, and more marvellously delivered from the bondage and tyranny of Pharaoh; to whom he gave his laws, constitutions, and ceremonies. He gave them possession of the land of Canaan; to them, after judges, and after Saul, he gave David to be king; to whom he made promise, That of the fruit of his loins should one sit for ever upon his regal seat. To this same people, from time to time, he sent prophets to bring them back to the right way of their God, from which oftentimes they declined by idolatry. And albeit, for their stubborn contempt of justice, he was

* Adorned.

compelled to give them into the hands of their enemies, as before he threatened by the mouth of Moses: insomuch that the holy city was destroyed, the temple burnt with fire, and the whole land left desolate for the space of seventy years; yet of mercy he brought them again to Jerusalem, where the city and temple were re-edified, and they, against all temptations and assaults of satan, did abide till the Messias came, according to the promise.

VI. *Of the Incarnation of Christ Jesus.*

When the fulness of time came, God sent his Son, his Eternal Wisdom, the Substance of his own glory, into this world; who took the nature of manhood, of the substance of a woman, namely, of a virgin, and that by the operation of the Holy Ghost; and so was born the just Seed of David, the Angel of the great counsel of God, the very Messias promised, whom we acknowledge and confess, Emmanuel, very God and very man, two perfect natures united and joined in one person. By which our confession, we condemn the damnable and pestilent heresies of Arius, Marcion, Eutyches, Nestorius, and such others as either deny the eternity of his Godhead, or the verity of his human nature, or confound them, or yet divide them.

VII. *Why it behoveth the Mediator to be very God and very Man.*

We acknowledge and confess, That this most wonderous conjunction betwixt the Godhead and manhood of Christ Jesus, did proceed from the eternal and immutable decree of God, whence also our salvation springeth and dependeth.

VIII. *Of Election.*

For that same eternal God and Father, who of mere grace elected us in Christ Jesus his Son, before the foundation of the world was laid, appointed him to be our Head, our Brother, our Pastor, and great Bishop of our souls. But because that the enmity between the justice of God and our sins was such, that no flesh by itself could, or might have attained unto God; it behoved that the Son of God should descend unto us, and take himself a body of our body, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones, and so become the perfect Mediator between God and man; giving power to

so many as believe in him, to be the sons of God, as he himself doth witness; "I pass up to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." By which most holy fraternity, whatsoever we have lost in Adam is restored to us again; and for this cause we are nothing afraid to call God our Father, not so much in that he hath created us, which we have in common with the reprobate, as for that he hath given to us his only Son to be our Brother, and given unto us grace to acknowledge and embrace him for our only Mediator, as before is said. It behoved further the Messias and Redeemer to be very God and very man, because he was to suffer the punishment due for our transgressions, and to present himself in the presence of his Father's judgment, as in our person, to suffer for our transgression and disobedience, by death to overcome him that was author of death. But because the Godhead only could not suffer death, neither could the manhood only overcome the same, he joined both together in one person, that the imbecility of the one should suffer, and be subject to death, which we had deserved, and the infinite and invisible power of the other—of the Godhead—should triumph, and purchase unto us life, liberty, and perpetual victory; and so we confess, and most undoubtedly believe.

IX. *Christ's Passion, Death, Burial, &c.*

That our Lord Jesus offered himself a voluntary sacrifice unto his Father for us; that he suffered the contradiction of sinners; that he was wounded and plagued for our transgressions; that he, being the clean and innocent Lamb of God, was condemned in the presence of an earthly judge, that we might be absolved before the tribunal-seat of our God; that he suffered not only the cruel death of the cross (which was accursed by the sentence of God) but also, that he suffered for a season the wrath of his Father, which sinners had deserved. But yet we avow, that he remained the only well-beloved and blessed Son of his Father, even in the midst of his anguish and torment, which he suffered in body and soul, to make the full satisfaction for the sins of his people. After which, we confess and avow, that there remains no other sacrifice for sins; which, if any affirm, we nothing doubt to avow, that they are blasphemous against Christ's death, and the everlasting purgation and satisfaction purchased unto us by the same.

X. *Resurrection.*

We undoubtedly believe, that insomuch as it was impossible that the pains of death should retain in bondage the Author of life, that our Lord Jesus, crucified, dead, and buried, who descended into hell, did rise again for our justification, and destroyed him who was the author of death; brought life again to us that were subject to death, and to the bondage of the same. We know that his resurrection was confirmed by the testimony of his very enemies; by the resurrection of the dead, whose sepulchres did open, and they did arise, and appeared to many within the city of Jerusalem. It was also confirmed by the testimony of angels, and by the senses and judgments of his apostles and others, who had conversation, and did eat and drink with him after his resurrection.

XI. *Ascension of Christ.*

We nothing doubt but that the self-same body which was born of the virgin, was crucified, dead, and buried, and which did rise again, did ascend into the heavens, for the accomplishment of all things; where, in our names, and for our comfort, he hath received all power in heaven and in earth. Where he sitteth at the right hand of the Father, enthroned in his kingdom, the Advocate and only Mediator for us; which glory, honour, and prerogative, he alone amongst the brethren shall possess, till that all his enemies be made his footstool; as we undoubtedly believe that they shall be in the final judgment; to the execution whereof, we certainly believe, that the same our Lord Jesus shall visibly and apparently return, as that he was seen to ascend. And then, we firmly believe, that the time of refreshing and restitution of all things shall come; insomuch that those who from the beginning have suffered violence, injury, and wrong, for righteousness' sake, shall inherit the blessed immortality promised from the beginning; but contrariwise, the stubborn, cruel, disobedient oppressors, filthy persons, adulterers, and all sorts of unthankful men, shall be cast into the dungeon of utter darkness, where their worm shall not die, neither yet their fire be extinguished. The remembrance of which day, and of the judgment to be executed in the same, is not only to us a bridle, whereby our carnal lusts are restrained,

but also such inestimable comfort, that neither may the threatenings of worldly princes, neither yet the fear of temporal death and present danger, move us to renounce and forsake that blessed society, which we the members have with our Head and only Mediator Christ Jesus; whom we confess and avow to be the Messias promised, the only Head of the church, our just Lawgiver, our only High Priest, Advocate, and Mediator: in whose honours and offices, if a man or an angel presume to intrude themselves, we utterly detest and abhor them, as blasphemous to our Sovereign and supreme Governor Christ Jesus.

XII. *Of Faith in the Holy Ghost.*

This faith, and the assurance of the same, proceedeth not from flesh and blood, that is to say, from no natural powers within us; but is the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, whom we confess to be God, equal with the Father and with the Son; who sanctifieth us, and bringeth us into all verity by his own operation; without whom we should remain for ever enemies to God, and ignorant of his Son Christ Jesus. For by nature we are so dead, so perverse and so blind, that we can neither feel when we are pricked, see the light when it shineth, nor assent to the will of God when it is revealed, except the Spirit of the Lord Jesus quickeneth that which is dead, removeth the darkness from our minds, and boweth our stubborn hearts to the obedience of his blessed will. And so, as we confess that God the Father created us when we were not, as his Son our Lord Jesus redeemed us when we were enemies to him, so, also we confess, that the Holy Ghost doth sanctify and regenerate us, without respect to any merit proceeding from us, be it before, or be it after, our regeneration. To speak this one thing yet in more plain words, as we willingly spoil ourselves of all honour and glory of our own creation and redemption, so do we also of our regeneration and sanctification; for of ourselves we are not sufficient to think one good thought; but He who hath begun the good work in us, is only he that continueth us in the same, to the praise and glory of his undeserved grace.

XIII. *The cause of good Works.*

So that the cause of good works we confess to be, not our free-will, but the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, who, dwelling

in our hearts by true faith, bringeth forth such good works, as God hath prepared for us to walk in. For this we most boldly affirm, that it is blasphemy to say that Christ Jesus abideth in the heart of those in whom there is no Spirit of sanctification; and therefore we fear not to affirm, that murderers, oppressors, cruel persecutors, adulterers, whoremongers, filthy persons, idolaters, drunkards, thieves, and all workers of iniquity, have neither true faith, neither any portion of the Spirit of sanctification, which proceedeth from the Lord Jesus, so long as they obstinately continue in their wickedness. For how soon soever the Spirit of the Lord Jesus (which God's elect children receive by true faith) taketh possession of the heart of any man, so soon doth he regenerate and renew the same man; so that he begins to hate that which before he loved, and begins to love that which before he hated; and from thence comes that continual battle which is betwixt the flesh and spirit in God's children; while the flesh and natural man (according to their own corruption) lusteth for things pleasing and delectable to itself, grudges in adversity, is lifted up in prosperity, and at every moment is prone and ready to offend the majesty of God. But the Spirit of God, which giveth witness unto our spirit that we are the sons of God, makes us to resist the devil, to abhor filthy pleasures, to groan in God's presence for deliverance from this bondage of corruption; and, finally, to triumph over sin, that it reign not in our mortal bodies. This battle have not the carnal men, being destitute of God's Spirit, but they do follow and obey sin with greediness, and without repentance, even as the devil and their corrupt lusts do prick them. But the sons of God, as afore is said, do fight against sin, do sob and mourn when they perceive themselves tempted to iniquity; and if they fall, they rise again with earnest and unfeigned repentance: and these things they do, not by their own power, but the power of the Lord Jesus (without whom they are able to do nothing) worketh in them all that is good.

XIV. *What Works are reputed good before God.*

We confess and acknowledge, that God hath given to man his holy law, in which not only are forbidden all such works as displease and offend his godly Majesty, but also are commanded all such as please him, and as he hath

promised to reward. And these works are of two sorts; the one is done to the honour of God, the other to the profit of our neighbours; and both have the revealed will of God for their assurance. To have one God; to worship and honour him; to call upon him in all our troubles; to reverence his holy name; to hear his word; to believe the same; to communicate with his holy sacraments, are the works of the first table. To honour father and mother, princes, rulers, and superior powers; to love them, to support them; yea, to obey their charges* (not repugning to the commandment of God;) to save the lives of innocents; to repress tyranny; to defend the oppressed; to keep our bodies clean and holy; to live in sobriety and temperance; to deal justly with all men, both in word and deed; and, finally, to repress the appetite of our neighbour's hurt, are the good works of the second table, which are most pleasing and acceptable unto God, as those works are commanded by himself. The contrary thereof is sin most odious, which always displeases him, and provokes him to anger; as, not to call upon him alone, when we have need; not to hear his word with reverence; to contemn and despise it; to have or to worship idols; to maintain and defend idolatry; lightly to esteem the reverend name of God; to profane, abuse, or contemn the sacraments of Christ Jesus; to disobey or resist any that God hath placed in authority (while they pass not over the bounds of their office); to murder, or consent thereunto; to bear hatred, or to suffer innocent blood to be shed, if we may gain-stand† it; and, finally, the transgressing of any other commandment in the first or second table, we confess and affirm to be sin, by which God's hot displeasure is kindled against the proud and unthankful world. So that good works we affirm to be those only that are done in faith, and at God's commandment, who in his law hath expressed what are the things that please him; and evil works we affirm to be, not only those that are expressly done against God's commandment, but those also that, in matters of religion, and worshipping of God, have no assurance, but the invention and opinion of man, which God from the beginning hath ever rejected, as by the prophet Isaiah, and by our Master Christ Jesus, we are taught in these words, "In vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines which are the precepts of men."

* Commands. † If we can withstand it.

XV. *The perfection of the Law, and the imperfection of Man.*

The law of God we confess and acknowledge most just, most equal, most holy, and most perfect, commanding those things which, being wrought in perfection, were able to give life, and to bring man to eternal felicity: but our nature is so corrupt, so weak, and so imperfect, that we are never able to fulfil the works of the law in perfection; yea, "If we say we have no sin (even after we are regenerated,) we deceive ourselves, and the verity of God is not in us." And therefore it behoveth us to apprehend Christ Jesus with his justice and satisfaction, who is the end and accomplishment of the law to all that believe, by whom we are set at this liberty, that the curse and malediction of the law fall not upon us, albeit we fulfil not the same in all points; for God the Father, beholding us in the body of his Son Christ Jesus, accepts our imperfect obedience, as if it were perfect, and covers our works, which are defiled with many spots, with the justice of his Son. We do not mean, that we are set so at liberty, that we owe no obedience to the law, (for that before we have plainly confessed,) but this we affirm, that no man on earth (Christ Jesus only excepted) hath given, giveth, or shall give, in work, that obedience to the law, which the law requires; but when we have done all things, we must fall down, and unfeignedly confess, that we are unprofitable servants. And therefore, whosoever boast themselves of the merits of their own works, or put their trust in the works of supererogation, they boast themselves of that which is not, and put their trust in damnable idolatry.

XVI. *Of the Church.*

As we believe in one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so do we most earnestly believe, that from the beginning there hath been, now is, and to the end of the world shall be, one Church. That is to say, one company and multitude of men chosen of God, who rightly worship and embrace him by true faith in Christ Jesus, who is the only Head of the same church, which also is the body and spouse of Christ Jesus; which church is Catholic, that is, Universal, because it containeth the elect of all ages, all realms, nations, and tongues, be they of the Jews, or be they of

the Gentiles, who have communion or society with God the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, through the sanctification of his Holy Spirit. And therefore it is called the Communion, not of profane persons, but of saints, who are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, have the fruition of the most inestimable benefits, namely, of one God, one Lord Jesus, one faith, and one baptism; without which church there is neither life nor eternal felicity. And therefore we utterly abhor the blasphemy of those that affirm, that men who live according to equity and justice shall be saved, what religion soever they have professed; for as without Christ Jesus there is neither life nor salvation, so shall there none be participant thereof, but such as the Father hath given unto his Son Christ Jesus, and those in time to come to him, avow his doctrine, and believe in him (we comprehend the children with the faithful parents). This church is invisible, known only to God, who only knoweth whom he hath chosen; and comprehendeth, as well, as is said, the elect that are departed (commonly called the Church triumphant,) as those that yet live, and fight against sin and satan, or shall live hereafter.

XVII. *The immortality of the Soul.*

The elect departed are in peace, and rest from their labours; not that they sleep, and come to a certain oblivion, (as some fantastic heads do affirm,) but that they are delivered from all fear, all torment, and all temptation, to which we and all God's elect are subject in this life; and therefore do bear the name of the Church militant. As on the contrary always, the reprobate and unfaithful departed, have anguish, torment, and pain, that cannot be expressed. So that neither the one nor the other are in such sleep, that they feel not joy or torment; as the parable of Christ Jesus in the sixteenth of Luke, his words to the thief, and these words of the souls crying under the altar, "O Lord! thou art righteous and just, how long shalt thou not revenge our blood upon them that dwell upon the earth?" (Rev. vi.) do plainly testify.

XVIII. *Of the Notes by the which the true Church is discerned from the false, and who shall be Judge of the Doctrine.*

Because that satan from the beginning hath laboured

to deck his pestilent synagogue with the title of the church of God, and hath inflamed the hearts of cruel murderers to persecute, trouble, and molest the true church and members thereof, as Cain did Abel, Ishmael Isaac, Esau Jacob, and the whole priesthood of the Jews Jesus Christ himself, and his apostles after him; it is a thing most requisite, that the true church be discerned from the filthy synagogue, by clear and perfect notes, lest we, being deceived, receive and embrace to our own condemnation the one for the other. The notes, signs, and assured tokens, whereby the immaculate spouse of Christ Jesus is known from the horrible harlot, the church malignant, we affirm, are neither antiquity, title usurped, lineal descent, place appointed, nor multitude of men approving any error: for Cain in age and title was preferred to Abel and Seth; Jerusalem had prerogative above all places of the earth, where also were the priests lineally descended from Aaron; and greater multitudes followed the scribes, pharisees, and priests, than unfeignedly believed and approved Christ Jesus and his doctrine: and yet, as we suppose, no man of sound judgment will grant, that any of the forenamed were the church of God.

The notes therefore of the true church of God, we believe, confess, and avow, to be, First, The true preaching of the word of God, in which God hath revealed himself to us, as the writings of the prophets and apostles do declare. Secondly, The right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus, which must be annexed to the word and promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our hearts. Lastly, Ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God's word prescribes, whereby vice is repressed, and virtue nourished. Wheresoever then these former notes are seen, and of any time continue, (be the number ever so few, about two or three) there, without all doubt, is the true church of Christ, who, according to his promise, is in the midst of them; not of that universal (of which we have before spoken,) but particular, such as was in Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, and other places in which the ministry was planted by Paul, and were of himself named the churches of God; and such churches we, the inhabitants of the realm of Scotland, professors of Christ Jesus, confess us to have in our cities, towns, and places reformed: for the doctrine taught in our churches is contained in the written word of God, namely, in the books of

the Old and New Testaments; in those books, we mean, which of the ancients have been reputed canonical: in the which we affirm, that all things necessary to be believed for the salvation of mankind are sufficiently expressed: the interpretation whereof, we confess, neither appertaineth unto any private or public person; neither yet to any church, for any pre-eminence or prerogative, personal or local, which one hath above another, but appertaineth to the Spirit of God, by the which also the scripture was written. When controversy then happeneth, for the right understanding of any place or sentence of scripture, or for the reformation of any abuse within the church of God, we ought not so much to look what men before us have said and done, as unto that which the Holy Ghost uniformly speaketh within the body of the scriptures, and unto that which Christ Jesus himself did, and commanded to be done. For this is a thing universally granted, that the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of unity, is in nothing contrary to himself. If then the interpretation, determination, or sentence of any doctor, church, or council, repugn to the plain word of God, written in any other place of scripture, it is a thing most certain, that there is not the true understanding and meaning of the Holy Ghost; although councils, realms, and nations, have approved and received the same: for we dare not receive and admit any interpretation, which directly oppugneth to any principal point of our faith, to any other plain text of scripture, or yet to the rule of charity.

XIX. *The authority of the Scriptures.*

And as we believe and confess the scriptures of God are sufficient to instruct and make the man of God perfect, so do we affirm and avow the authority of the same to be of God, and neither to depend on men or angels. We affirm therefore, that such as allege the scriptures to have no other authority, but that which is received from the church, are blasphemous against God, and injurious to the true church, which always heareth and obeyeth the voice of her own spouse and pastor, but taketh not upon her to be mistress over the same.

XX. *Of the General Councils, of their power, authority, and the cause of their convention.*

As we do not rashly condemn that which godly men assembled together in general councils, lawfully gathered,

have propounded unto us; so, without just examination, we dare not receive whatsoever is obtruded unto men, under the name of General Councils: for plain it is, that, as they were men, so have some of them manifestly erred, and that in matters of great weight and importance. So far then as the council proveth the determination and commandment that it giveth, by the plain word of God, so far do we reverence and embrace the same: but if men, under the name of a council, pretend to forge unto us new articles of our faith, or to make constitutions repugning to the word of God, then utterly we may refuse the same, as the doctrine of devils, which draweth our souls from the voice of our only God, to follow the doctrines and constitutions of men. The cause then why general councils were convened, was neither to make any perpetual law which God before had not made, neither yet to forge new articles of our belief; neither to give the word of God authority, much less to make that to be his word, or yet the true interpretation of the same, which was not before by his holy will expressed in his word: but the cause of councils (we mean of such as merited the name of councils) was partly for confutation of heresies, and for giving public confession of their faith to the posterities following; which both they did, by the authority of God's written word, and not by any opinion or prerogative that they could not err, by reason of their general assembly. And this we judge to have been the chief cause of general councils. The other was for good policy and order, to be constituted and observed in the church, in which, as in the house of God, it becometh all things to be done decently and in order: not that we think that one policy, and one order in ceremonies, can be appointed for all ages, times, and places; for as ceremonies, such as men have devised, are but temporal, so may and ought they to be changed, when they rather foster superstition, than edify the church using the same.

XXI. *Of the Sacraments.*

As the fathers under the law, besides the verity of the sacrifices, had two chief sacraments, namely, circumcision and the passover, the despisers and contemners whereof were not reputed for God's people; so we acknowledge and confess, that we now, in time of the gospel, have two sacraments only, instituted by the Lord Jesus, and

commanded to be used by all those that will be reputed to be members of his body; namely, Baptism, and the Supper or table of the Lord Jesus, called, "The communion of his body and blood." And these sacraments (as well of the old as of the new testament) were instituted of God, not only to make a visible difference betwixt his people and those that were without his league,* but also to exercise the faith of his children; and, by participation of the same sacraments, to seal in their hearts the assurance of his promise, and of that most blessed conjunction, union, and society, which the elect have with their Head Christ Jesus. And thus we utterly condemn the vanity of those that affirm sacraments to be nothing else but naked and bare signs; no, we assuredly believe, that by baptism we are ingrafted into Jesus Christ, to be made partakers of his justice,† by the which our sins are covered and remitted: and also, that in the Supper, rightly used, Christ Jesus is so joined with us, that he becomes the very nourishment and food of our souls.

Not that we imagine any transubstantiation of bread into Christ's natural body, and of wine into his natural blood, as the papists have perniciously taught, and damnably believed; but this union and communion which we have with the body and blood of Christ Jesus, in the right use of the sacraments, is wrought by operation of the Holy Ghost; who, by true faith, carrieth us above all things that are visible, carnal, and earthly, and maketh us to feed upon the body and blood of Christ Jesus, which was once broken and shed for us, which now is in the heaven, and appeareth in the presence of his Father for us. And yet, notwithstanding the far distance of place which is between his body now glorified in the heaven, and us now mortal in this earth, yet we most assuredly believe, that the bread which we break, is the communion of Christ's body; and the cup which we bless, is the communion of his blood: so that we confess, and undoubtedly believe, that the faithful, in the right use of the Lord's table, so do eat the body, and drink the blood of the Lord Jesus, that he remaineth in them, and they in him. Yea, that they are so made flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones, that as the eternal Godhead hath given to the flesh of Christ Jesus (which of its own condition and nature was mortal and corruptible) life and immortality, so doth Christ Jesus his

* Covenant. † Righteousness.

flesh and blood, eaten and drunken by us, give to us the same prerogatives; which albeit, we confess, are neither given unto us at that time only, neither yet by the proper power and virtue of the sacraments only. Yet we affirm, that the faithful, in the right use of the Lord's table, have such conjunction with Christ Jesus as the natural man cannot comprehend; yea, and further, we affirm, that albeit the faithful, oppressed by negligence and manly* infirmity, do not profit so much as they would, at the very instant action of† the Supper, yet shall it afterwards bring forth fruit as lively seed sown in good ground; for the Holy Spirit, which can never be divided from the right institution of the Lord Jesus, will not frustrate the faithful of the fruit of that mystical action. But all this, we say, cometh by true faith, which apprehendeth Christ Jesus, who only maketh his sacraments effectual unto us: and therefore, whosoever slandereth us, as though we affirmed or believed the sacraments to be only naked and bare signs, do injury unto us, and speak against a manifest truth. But this liberally and frankly we must confess, that we make a distinction betwixt Christ Jesus in his natural substance, and betwixt the elements in the sacramental signs: so that we will neither worship the signs, in place of that which is signified by them, neither yet do we despise and interpret them as unprofitable and vain, but do use them with all reverence, examining ourselves diligently before we do so; because we are assured by the mouth of the apostle, that such as eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus.

XXII. *Of the right administration of the Sacraments.*

That sacraments be rightly ministered, we judge two things requisite; the one, that they be ministered by lawful ministers, whom we affirm to be only they that are appointed to the preaching of the word, or into whose mouths God hath put some sermon of exhortation, they being men of lawful chusing thereto by some church; the other, that they be ministered in such elements, and in such sort, as God hath appointed: else we affirm, that they cease to be right sacraments of Jesus Christ. And therefore it is, that we flee the society with the papistical church, in participation of their sacraments; first, Because

* Human. † Partaking of.

their ministers are no ministers of Jesus Christ; yea, what is more horrible, they suffer women, whom the Holy Ghost will not suffer to teach in the congregation, to baptize. And, secondly, because they have so adulterated both the one sacrament and the other, with their own inventions, that no part of Christ's action abideth in the original purity; for oil, salt, spittle, and such like in baptism, are but men's inventions; adoration, veneration, bearing through streets and towns, and keeping of bread in boxes, are profanation of Christ's sacraments, and no use of the same: for Christ Jesus said, "Take and eat," &c. "Do ye this in remembrance of me." By which words and charge, he sanctified bread and wine to be the sacrament of his holy body and blood, to the end that the one should be eaten, and that all should drink of the other, and not that they should be kept to be worshipped and honoured as God, as the blind papists have done heretofore, who also have committed sacrilege, stealing from the people one part of the sacrament, namely, the blessed cup.

Moreover, that the sacraments be rightly used, it is required, that the end and cause why the sacraments were instituted be understood and observed, as well as of the minister as the receivers: for if the opinion be changed in the receiver, the right use ceases; which is most evident by the rejection of the sacrifices of old, (as also if the teacher teach false doctrine,) which were odious and abominable unto God (albeit they were his own ordinances,) because that wicked men used them to another end than God hath ordained. The same affirm we of the sacraments in the papistical church, in which we affirm the whole action of the Lord Jesus to be adulterated, as well in the external form, as in the end and opinion. What Christ Jesus did and commanded to be done, is evident by the three evangelists who speak of the sacrament, and by St. Paul: what the priest doth at his altar, we need not to rehearse. The end and cause of Christ's institution, and why the self-same should be used, is expressed in these words, "Do ye this in remembrance of me: as oft as ye shall eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, ye shall show forth (that is, extol, preach, and magnify) the Lord's death till he come." But to what end, and in what opinion, the priests say their masses, let the words of the same, their own doctors and writings witness; namely, that they are mediators betwixt Christ and his Church, to offer unto God

the Father, a sacrifice propitiatory for the sins of the quick and the dead: which doctrine, as blasphemous to Christ Jesus, and making derogation to the sufficiency of his only sacrifice, once offered for purgation of all those that shall be sanctified, we utterly abhor, detest, and renounce.

XXIII. *To whom Sacraments appertain.*

We confess and acknowledge, that baptism appertaineth as well to the infants of the faithful, as unto those that are of age and discretion; and so we condemn the error of those, who deny baptism to appertain to children, before that they have faith and understanding.* But the supper of the Lord we confess to appertain only to such as have been of the household of faith, and can try and examine themselves, as well in their faith, as in their duties towards their neighbours. Such as eat and drink at that holy table without faith, or being at dissension and division with their brethren, do eat unworthily; and therefore it is, that, in our churches, ministers take public and particular examination of the knowledge and conversation of such as are to be admitted to the table of the Lord Jesus.

XXIV. *Of the Civil Magistrate.*

We confess and acknowledge empires, kingdoms, dominions, and cities, to be destinated and ordained by God; the powers and authorities in the same (be it of emperors in their empires, of kings in their realms, dukes and princes in their dominions, or of other magistrates in free cities,) to be God's holy ordinance, ordained for manifestation of his own glory, and for the singular profit and commodity of mankind. So that whosoever goeth about to take away, or to confound the holy state of civil policies, now long established, we affirm the same men not only to be enemies to mankind, but also wickedly to fight against God's express will. We further confess and acknowledge, that such persons as are placed in authority, are to be loved, honoured, feared, and holden in most reverend estimation, because they are the lieutenants of God, in whose session God himself doth sit and judge,

* In giving this confession, it was necessary to retain the whole, or a complete view of the doctrines of Knox and his brethren could not have been presented. The reader, of course, will be aware that a difference of opinion as to this article exists among protestants.

(yea, even the judges and princes themselves,) to whom by God is given the sword, to the praise and defence of good men, and to revenge and punish all open malefactors. Moreover, to kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates, we affirm, that chiefly and most principally the reformation and purgation of religion appertains; so that not only they are appointed for civil policy, but also for maintenance of the true religion, and for suppressing of all idolatry and superstition whatsoever; as in David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, and others, highly commended for their zeal in the cause, may be espied. And therefore we confess and avow, that such as resist the supreme powers (doing that which appertaineth to their charge,) do resist God's ordinance, and therefore cannot be guiltless. And further, we affirm, that whosoever deny unto them their aid, counsel, and comfort, while the princes and rulers vigilantly travail in the executing of their office, that the same men deny their help, support, and counsel to God, who, by the presence of his lieutenant, craveth it of them.

XXV. *The gifts freely given to the Church.*

Albeit that the word of God truly preached, the sacraments rightly ministered, and discipline executed according to the word of God, be the certain and infallible signs of the true Church; yet do we not so mean, that every particular person, joined with such a company, is an elect member of Christ Jesus. For we acknowledge and confess, that darnel and cockle may be sown, and grow in great abundance, and chaff lie in the midst of the wheat. That is, the reprobate may be joined in the society of the elect, and may externally use, with them, the benefits of the word and sacraments. But such being but temporal professors, in mouth but not in heart, do fall back, and continue not to the end; and therefore have they no fruit of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension. But such as with heart unfeignedly believe, and with mouth boldly confess, the Lord Jesus, as before we have said, shall most assuredly receive these gifts;—First, In this life remission of sins, by faith only in Christ's blood, insomuch, that albeit sin remain and continually abide in these mortal bodies, yet it is not imputed unto us, but is remitted and covered with Christ's justice. Secondly, In the general judgment there shall be given to every man and woman, resurrection of the flesh: for the sea shall give up her dead,

the earth those that therein be inclosed; yea, the Eternal, our God, shall stretch out his hand upon the dust, and the dead shall arise incorruptible, and that in the substance of the same flesh that every man now bears, to receive, according to their works, glory or punishment. For such as now delight in vanity, cruelty, filthiness, superstition, or idolatry, shall be adjudged to the fire inextinguishable, in which they shall be tormented for ever, as well in their body, as in their souls, which they now give to serve the devil in all abomination. But such as continue in well-doing to the end, boldly professing the Lord Jesus, we constantly believe that they shall receive glory, honour, and immortality, to reign for ever in life everlasting, with Christ Jesus, whose glorified body all his elect shall be like, when he shall appear again to judgment, and shall render up the kingdom to God his Father, who then shall be, and ever shall remain, All in all things, God blessed for ever; to whom, with the Son, and with the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

"Arise, O Lord! and let thine enemies be confounded; let them flee from thy presence that hate thy holy name: give thy servants strength to speak thy word in boldness, and let all nations attain to thy true knowledge."

These acts and articles were read in the face of parliament, and ratified by the three estates of this realm, at Edinburgh, the 17th day of August, in the year of our Lord 1560.*

* "This our Confession was publicly read, first in audience of the lords of the articles; and afterwards, in the audience of the whole parliament, where were present, not only such as professed Christ Jesus, but also a great number of the adversaries of our religion, who were commanded, in God's name, to object, if they could say any thing against that doctrine. Some of our ministers were present, standing upon their feet, ready to have answered, in case any would have defended papistry, and impugned our affirmatives: but when no objection was made, there was a day appointed for concurrence in that and other heads.

"Our Confession was read every article by itself over again, as they were written in order, and the vote of every man was required accordingly. Of the temporal estate, only the earl of Athol, the lords Somervel and Borthwick, gave their votes on the contrary; and yet, for their dissenting, they produced no better reason, but, 'We will believe as our fathers believed.' The bishops, the papistical we mean, spake nothing. The rest of the whole three estates, by their public votes, affirmed the doctrine; and the rather, because that the papistical bishops fain would, but durst say nothing on the contrary.

"This was the vote of the earl Marshal, 'It is long since I have had some favour unto the truth, and since that, I have had a suspicion of the papistical religion; but I praise my God, who this day hath fully resolved me in the one and the other. For seeing that the bishops, who for their learning can, and for their zeal that they should bear to the verity would, as I suppose, have gainsaid any thing that directly repugneth to the verity of God; seeing, I say, the bishops here present speak nothing to the contrary of the doctrine proposed, I cannot but hold it for the very truth of God, and the contrary to be deceivable doctrine. And therefore, so far as in me lieth, I approve the one, and contemn the other; and do further ask of God, that not only I, but also all my posterity, may enjoy the comfort of the doctrine that this day our ears have heard. And yet more I must vote, as it were by way of protestation, that if any persons ecclesiastical shall after this oppose themselves to this our Confession, that they have no place nor credit; considering that they, having long advertisement, and full knowledge of this our Confession, none is now found, in lawful, free, and quiet parliament, to oppose themselves to that which we profess: and therefore, if any of this generation pretend to do it after this, I protest that he be reputed rather one that loveth his own advantage and the glory of the world, than the truth of God, and the salvation of men's souls.'

"After the voting and ratification of this our Confession by the whole body of the parliament, there were also pronounced two acts: the one against the mass, and the abuse of the sacraments; and the other against the supremacy of the pope."—*Knox, History,* b. iii.

Calderwood says, "Sir James Sandiland was directed to go to France, to queen Mary, to seek the ratification of the Confession of Faith, and the other acts, but returned with a refusal: no less was expected, but it was thought meet to try her disposition."—*Calderwood's True History of the Church of Scotland*, p. 14.

The copies of the Confession, as printed in Knox and Calderwood, have been compared for this edition.

AN

ANSWER

TO

A LETTER OF A JESUIT NAMED TYRIE,

BY

JOHN KNOX.

PROVERBS XXVI.

Answer not a fool according to his foolishness, lest thou be like him: answer a fool according to his foolishness, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

The contrariety appearing, at the first sight, betwixt these two sentences stayed for a time, both my heart to meditate, and my hand to write any thing contrary to that blasphemous letter. But when, with better mind, God gave me to consider, that whosoever opposes not himself boldly to blasphemy and manifest lies, differs little from traitors; cloaking and fostering, so far as in him lies, the treason of traitors, and damnable impiety of those, against whom God's just vengeance must burn without end, unless speedy repentance follow. To quiet, therefore, my own conscience, I put hand to the pen as followeth.

1572.

During the residence of Knox at St. Andrews, in 1572, towards the close of his life, he published a vindication of the reformed religion, in answer to a letter written by a Scots Jesuit, named Tyrie. Knox had written this in 1568; he published it four years afterwards, with additions, as a farewell address to the world, and a dying testimony to the truths he had so long taught and defended. He subjoined one of the letters he had formerly written to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Bowes, to support her under the mental conflicts she experienced.—See *M'Crie's Life of Knox.*

This treatise is among the most interesting of the writings of the Scottish Reformer. The sophistries of the Jesuit are completely exposed, and we have answers to many of those arguments which the Jesuits of the present day have brought forward dressed up in specious colours. The ardent desire of Knox to depart and to be with Christ is fully expressed; and the impartial reader of the letter to Tyrie, with its appendages, will be fully satisfied that Knox was not the turbulent ambitious character which his adversaries represent him to have been.

ANSWER, &c.

JOHN KNOX, *the servant of Jesus Christ, now weary of the world, and daily looking for the dissolution of this my earthly tabernacle, to the Faithful, that God of his mercy shall appoint to fight after me, desires grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Spirit of sanctification, to resist all kind of impiety, in these last and most wicked days, wherein satan rages, knowing that he has a short time to trouble God's people.*

WONDER not, gentle reader, that such an argument should proceed from me in these dolorous days, after that I have taken good night at the world, and at all the fasherie* of the same, except to lament for my own sins, and for the sins of others; of whom, alas, I fear many cannot lament for themselves, because they have sold themselves to work impiety, with all greediness, without sense and feeling of any dolour that proceedeth from God. Yet, Lord, thou knowest thy own, and thou drawest from iniquity all that unfeignedly call upon thy name. There are seven years past, since a scroll, sent from a Jesuit to his brother, was presented unto me by a faithful brother, requiring some answer to be made to the same; whose just petition, I, willing to obey, put my hand to the pen, although I found small time of quietness; for it was immediately after that I was called back from exile by the church of Edinburgh, after David's judgment.† Amongst my other cares, I scribbled that which follows, and that in a few days; which being finished, I repented of my labour, and purposed fully to have suppressed it. Which, no doubt, I had done, if that the devil had not stirred up the Jesuits,‡ of purpose to trouble godly hearts, with the same

* Turmoils, troubles. † The death of Rizzio, A. D. 1566.

‡ The order of the Jesuits at that time was recently instituted, and had just begun to develope the sophistries which it subsequently carried to such an extent. Let us remember that the Jesuits have ever been the most determined opponents of the Reformation, though veiling their proceedings under an appearance of moderation, whereby many have been and still are deceived.

arguments which Tyrie uses, amplified and set forth with all the dog-eloquence that satan can devise for suppressing the free progress of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and for the curing of the wounded head of the beast, that Roman antichrist, who shall go to destruction in despite of all those that study either to erect or yet to maintain him and his damnable abuses: which God has disclosed to such as the devil has not blinded so that they cannot discern betwixt darkness and light. The order that is kept in answering his proud arrogancy and presumptuous foolishness, the contents of the treatise will declare.

I have added unto this preface a meditation or prayer, thrown forth of my sorrowful heart, and pronounced by my half-dead tongue, before I was compelled to leave my flock of Edinburgh, who now are dispersed, suffering little less calamity than did the faithful after the persecution of Stephen. Lord, comfort and strengthen them to the end, that once (at last) we may meet in glory; for all worldly meeting is but vain, and an occasion of new dolour. Call for me, dear brethren, that God in his mercy will please to put an end to my long and painful battle: for now being unable to fight, as God aforetime gave strength, I thirst for an end before I be more troublesome to the faithful. And yet, Lord, let my desire be moderated by thy Holy Spirit, and give me patience to bear whatsoever it pleases thy godly Majesty to lay upon this my wicked carcass.

THE PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and put an end, at thy good pleasure, to this my miserable life; for justice and truth are not to be found among the sons of men!

John Knox, with deliberate mind—to his God.

Be merciful unto me, O Lord, and call not into judgment my manifold sins; and chiefly those, whereof the world is not able to accuse me. In youth, mid-age, and now, after many battles, I find nothing in me but vanity and corruption. For, in quietness I am negligent, in trouble impatient, tending to desperation; and in the mean state, I am so carried away with vain fantasies, that, alas, O Lord, they withdraw me from the presence of thy Majesty. Pride and ambition assault me on the one part, covetousness and malice trouble me on the other: briefly, O Lord, the affections of the flesh do almost suppress the operation of thy Spirit. I take thee, O Lord, who only knowest the secrets of hearts, to record, that in none of the aforesaid I do delight; but that with them I am troubled, and that sorely against the desire of my inward man, which sobs for my corruption, and would repose in thy mercy alone. To the which I claim, and that in the promise, that thou hast made to all penitent sinners (of which number I profess myself to be one) in the obedience and death of my only Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. In whom, by thy mere grace, I doubt not myself to be elected to eternal salvation, whereof thou hast given unto me (unto me, O Lord, most wretched and unthankful creature) most assured signs.

For being drowned in ignorance, thou hast given to me knowledge above the common sort of my brethren; my tongue hast thou used to set forth thy glory, to oppugn idolatry, errors, and false doctrine. Thou hast compelled me to forespeak, as well deliverance to the afflicted, as destruction to certain disobedient; the performance whereof, not I alone, but the very blind world has already seen. But above all, O Lord, thou, by the power of thy Holy Spirit, hast sealed into my heart remission of my sins, which I acknowledge and confess myself to have received by the precious blood of Jesus Christ once shed; by whose perfect obedience I am assured my manifold rebellions are effaced, my grievous sins purged, and my soul made the

tabernacle of thy godly Majesty. Thou, O Father of mercies, thy Son, our Lord Jesus, my only Saviour, Mediator, and Advocate, and thy Holy Spirit, remaining in the same by true faith ; which is the only victory that overcometh the world.

To thee, therefore, O Lord, I commend my spirit ; for I thirst to be dissolved from this body of sin, and am assured that I shall rise again in glory, howsoever it be that the wicked, for a time, shall tread me, and others thy servants, under their feet. Be merciful, O Lord, unto the church within this realm ; continue with it the light of thy gospel ; augment the number of true preachers ; and let thy merciful providence look upon my desolate bed-fellow, the fruit of her bosom, and my two dear children, Nathanael and Eliezer.* Now, Lord, put an end to my misery.

At Edinburgh, the 12th of March, 1565.

* Tyrie, in his reply, scoffs at this expression of Knox's pious affection for his family ; and in doing so discovers that he was as great a stranger to conjugal and parental feelings as he was to the rules of logic.—*M'Crie.*

AN ANSWER

TO A LETTER OF A JESUIT, NAMED TYRIE,

By JOHN KNOX.

Of late days there came to our hands a letter, directed unto you, right worshipful, from James Tyrie, who styles himself your humble servitor and brother. The beginning whereof showeth the care that he bears of your salvation, his charity that has moved him so oft to write unto you, and therewith covertly he accuses you, that he has received no answer of his former, and yet that the same charity moveth him still to continue in his former suit. In the progress of the said letter he plainly forthshows what is his scope and purpose; namely, to alienate your mind from the truth of God, now of God's great mercy, after long darkness, offered to this realm. The purpose, as we suppose, wherefore ye sent the same letter unto us, is, that we may give solutions to those things that he objects against the truth. Which to do were not very hard, provided that his diteme nt* were sensible, and his arguments formal,† and proper‡ to that which he would persuade. But because, in writing, he appears to us rather scabrushly§ to have translated that which he writes forth of Latin, or of some other foreign tongue, than freely to have expressed his own mind; and because that his arguments are not only impertinent, but also so general that in no wise they conclude that which he would prove,— our answers must exceed the measure of a missive; and yet we shall avoid, so far as we can, all unprofitable prolixity. But lest that any should think that we deprave‖ either his ditement or arguments, we shall insert his whole letter, from parcel to parcel, and give answer to such heads as either are blasphemous against the truth of God, or yet may be offensive to the weak consciences of men. In other things we shall not be curious. His letter thus begins,

* Indictment, accusation.
† Regular.
‡ Suitable.
§ Harshly.
‖ Disparage, misrepresent.

Tyrie's Letter.

Sir, *Efter hartly commendatioun, of seruice, and prayeris, that I haue written sa oft afoir* (we keep his own words and orthography), *it come of my of cheritie, that I aucht to zow, for sindrie ressounis,* and of the solicitude that charity caused me to have of the eternal salvation of your soul, desiring by your answer to have known your mind in that behalf; which, since I have not obtained as yet, I have thought, having opportunity of this bearer, to write this writing among the rest, and to exhort you thereby, that ye would earnestly* (*as it becomes a man to whom God has given so many gifts and talents*) *and ripely consider by what way ye must come to that end, to the which God has created and redeemed you.*

Answer.

To this long preface we only answer this:—That if the scribes and pharisees, who compassed sea and land to make a proselyte, (Matt. xxiii. 15,) got a curse by the mouth of our Master, Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all their apparent zeal and painful travail; who can doubt but that such as study to draw back again to superstition and idolatry such as God has called from the same, shall receive a double malediction, under what pretence so ever they do it? For, if they, who brought heathens and manifest idolaters to some religion, were accursed, how much more are they detestable, that travail to bring men from a true religion to the deepest idolatry that ever yet was upon the face of the earth? Which long has been maintained in the papistical church, whereto we perceive the writer of the letter would entice you, as his subsequent persuasions manifestly declare. For thus he writeth:—

Tyrie's Letter.

Which appears to me to be the only faith and religion kept in the catholic Church of Christ since the beginning thereof. Which appears clearly, by the most plain words of the prophet Isaiah, where he speaks of the Church: "The people and kingdom that serveth thee not shall perish." Which words, if any would apply to their new-

* Thus far is according to the original; but in the rest of Tyrie's letter, as well as throughout the treatise, the modern spelling has been adopted. Knox's printed works differ very little from the phraseology and diction of the present day.

found churches, and specially to your invisible church of Scotland (but yet eight years old), he is convicted. For it is manifest, that a thousand years ago in all the world there was people that believed as they do who defend the contrary, which no man but he that would show his impudence and his ignorance together dare deny: and of the Church whereof the prophet speaks, it is said by him in the second chapter, that it shall be manifest and visible through all the world. Wherefore, if ye cannot show what place of the world three hundred years ago your church was in, it follows of necessity that it is no church, &c.

Answer.

The first part of his counsel we approve, and add thereto, that the life everlasting consists in the knowledge of the only true God, and in the knowledge of him whom he has sent, Jesus Christ: (John xvii.) That he who believes in the Son of God has life everlasting, and is already passed from death to life; but he that believes not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him. (John v.) We further affirm, that without the society and bosom of the true Church, never was, is, or shall be salvation unto man. In these and like general heads we disagree not from the papists; but the difference and doubt stands in the particulars, namely, what faith is, and what ground it has; what is religion, and wherein it differs from superstition and from idolatry: and finally, what is the true Church, and how it may be discerned from the synagogue of satan. These heads, we say, ought he in special to have treated of unto you, if he had been minded to have instructed you in a truth. But because, as the progress of his letter declares, his mind was to draw you to the bondage of that Roman antichrist, he takes general propositions, most true and most certain in themselves, whereupon he would conclude that which is most false, and altogether pernicious to the salvation of man. To let the craft of satan more evidently appear, we shall draw his persuasion in form of an argument, and, afterwards, return to the further meaning of the prophets, and to the declaration of these terms, Faith, Religion, and the Catholic Church.*

Major. The prophet affirms, that whosoever shall not serve Jerusalem, shall perish.

* The Universal Church of Christ.

Minor. But the promise made to Jerusalem appertains to the Church.

Conclusion. Therefore, whosoever serves not the Church, shall perish.

This whole argument we admit, and most constantly we do affirm it; and yet shall he never be able to prove his intent, which is, that the church of Scotland is no church. We will open the wound which the writer of the letter keeps covered, and yet it most grieves him, as it does the rest of all papists. The realm of Scotland (all praise be to God) has refused the pope, that Roman antichrist; and not only by preaching, but also by the public laws, has condemned his tyrannical laws, his odious superstitions, and usurped jurisdiction. And therefore the papists cry, that we are declined from the true Church, and are fallen back from the catholic faith. But before they are able to convict us of these crimes, they must prove two things. First, that whatsoever was promised to Jerusalem does properly and only appertain unto Rome; and this must they do, not by conjectures, but by plain words, as God pronounced by his prophet of Jerusalem. This is the first.

The second is, that albeit Rome were as able to prove a promise made to it, as Jerusalem was, of whom it was said,—This is my rest; here will I dwell, because I have chosen it; and albeit that the popes of Rome, whom he styles the perpetual succession of that Church, had as assured and plain a probation, that by God they were called, by God they were admitted, and that by God they should be maintained in their ministry and function, as the Levites and successors of Aaron had to produce at all times for their defence; yet if they, (we say,) who call themselves the successors of the apostles, be not able to prove that they have constantly remained in the first league and covenant which Christ Jesus made with his apostles, when he sent them forth to preach the glad tidings of the kingdom, and to establish his throne, not only amongst the Jews, but also amongst the Gentiles, according to the former prophecies: albeit, (we say) that all these former they were able to prove (as they are never able to do,) yet have they said nothing that may help their cause, nor hurt ours, unless they therewith plainly prove that the church of Rome, and the succession of the same, has remained and yet remains in the original purity of the

apostles, in doctrine, life, laws, and ceremonies. For these being corrupted, the title of succession will no more help them than did the bragging of the priests under the law, who cried against the prophet Jeremiah—"The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." What was answered unto them, let the seventh chapter of his prophecy witness. But further of the succession and of the assurance thereof hereafter.

Now must we something speak of Faith, Religion, and the Catholic Church, wherewith he would terrify your conscience and deface the truth; and then must we answer to his blasphemous taunts and mockage. Before, we have confessed, that to live without faith, without religion, and without the society of the Catholic Church, brings with it most certainly death and damnation. But yet, we affirm, that all opinion which is commonly received under the name of faith, is not faith which God approves; but true faith must have for the ground and assurance thereof God's expressed word, of his mercy promised in Christ Jesus, whereto the heart of the faithful must consent, being so moved by the Holy Ghost. And therefore we fear not to affirm, that the papists, having no better ground for their faith than consent of men, decrees of councils, and antiquity of time, have no faith, but a fond, yea, a damnable opinion. And the same we affirm of religion, which, if it be pleasing and acceptable unto God, must have his own commandment and approbation for a warrant; otherwise it cannot but be odious in his presence, as a thing repugnant to his express commandment, saying, Not that which appears good in thy own eyes, shalt thou do to the Lord thy God, but what the Lord thy God has commanded thee, that do thou: add nothing to it, diminish nothing from it. (Deut. iv. xii.) By this precept of that eternal God, who is immutable, and can command nothing but that which is just, all people, realms, and nations, that will avow themselves to be the inheritance of the Lord, are bound and obliged to measure their religion, not by the example of other realms, neither yet by their own good intention, or determination of men, but only by the expressed word of God. So that what therein is commanded, ought to be done, and what is not commanded by him, ought in no wise to be done by the people of God, what appearance or external show of holiness soever it has. And, therefore, have we most justly rejected the rabble of ceremonies

which the papists held for the chief exercise of their religion, as things having no better ground than the invention and consent of men.

Now shortly, of the Church commonly called catholic. The name of the Church is common, and is taken as well for the congregation of the wicked, as for the assembly of the godly; as it is plain by the words of David, saying, I have hated the church, or the assembly of the wicked. (Ps. xxvi.) The term catholic, which signifies universal, has not included in it that virtue which papists allege, that is, that whatsoever is catholic, must be good. For if so it were, then sin in the original world should have been good, for it was so catholic, that is universal, that it overflowed the whole earth, only one family excepted. How universal idolatry was amongst the Gentiles, histories witness; and how broad the pestilent sect of Mahomet is this day spread, experience teaches us. And yet we suppose, that no man of right judgment will either approve the one or the other, notwithstanding their universality; and, therefore, we must have a better assurance of that Church, to the which we ought to join ourselves, than that it is catholic or universal: namely, it must be holy, and the communion of saints; for in the confession of our faith, we say not, I believe the Church universal, but, "I believe the holy Church universal, the communion of saints." Wherefore we affirm, that if that church, which is called catholic or universal, have not holiness in the heart by true faith, and the confession of the same in the mouth, and in the forehead, it ceases to be the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ, in whose bosom the sons of God are nourished to the life everlasting. And so, before the writer of the letter shall be able to convict us, that we have declined from the holy Church, he must first define what is the true holiness of the Church, wherein it consists, from whom it flows, and what is the effect of the same. And when thus he has done, he must prove that the church of Rome has been, and is, only holy, so that no church before it did ever enjoy that title, neither yet that any that after may ensue it, may so be justly called; and this we think will be very hard to master Tyrie and all the Jesuits in Europe to prove.

But now, that the vanity of his argument may the more evidently appear, we will, in as few words as we can, examine the mind of the prophet. Such as diligently

mark the scope of the prophet Isaiah, will clearly see, that from the fortieth chapter of his prophecy, to the end of the same, he labours principally to comfort Jerusalem, and the nation of the Jews, whose miserable destruction and fearful captivity he foresaw in spirit, he pronounced the same in his public sermons, and left the memorial and undoubted register thereof to the posterity that was to follow, and was to be partakers of all the plagues that were before spoken. And lest that they, in the midst of their calamity, should have despaired of any deliverance, from the same fortieth chapter back, we say that the prophet, as the messenger of God's mercy, pronounces to Jerusalem, to mount Sion, and to the afflicted Jews, deliverance from captivity, the protection of God to be their defence, the destruction of Babylon, and of all their enemies; the coming of the Messias promised unto them, the felicity of his kingdom, the vocation of the Gentiles; and finally, the promises flowing from mercy, that he had made unto them to continue for ever. And among these manifold promises, this was one, "The kingdom and the nation that shall not serve thee, shall perish."

Now gladly would we learn of this writer, to what realm, to what nation, to what province or city will he appoint us, that therein we may serve Jesus Christ, and his immaculate spouse, the Church, to the end that we shall not perish. If he will name Rome, and the church thereof, then must we demand two things: the former, What became of all the faithful, the space of a thousand years that flowed betwixt the making of the former promises and the days of the apostles, the time when the gospel began publicly to be offered unto the Gentiles; all which time Rome was nothing but a den of idolatry. We think he will not say, that the faithful perished; and we are bold to say, that the faithful served not Rome, neither yet the church contained therein all that time. This is the first thing whereof we would be resolved. The second is, That if the writer will allege, that during all that time the promise foresaid appertained to Jerusalem and unto mount Sion; but that after the ascension of Jesus Christ, and after that the gospel was received of the Gentiles, the promise, which before was made to Jerusalem, was transferred unto Rome: if so be, we pray the writer, that after he has consulted with the finest* papists, be they Jesuits, or be they

* Most artful.

others, that he will show unto us, where we shall find the resignation and the assurance thereof. We clearly read the promises made to Jerusalem and unto mount Sion. We find that the gospel was there preached in despite of satan. We find that from thence Peter and John were sent to Samaria, and thereafter the gospel was planted among the Gentiles. We find further, that Paul wrote to the saints that were at Rome, and that he himself was carried prisoner to it, and that he remained two years there, under custody in his lodging: but that ever the promises made to Jerusalem were transferred unto Rome, we find not. And, therefore, albeit that we of the realm of Scotland have refused Rome and the tyranny thereof, we think not that we have refused the society of Christ's Church; but that we are joined with it, and daily are fed of our mother's breasts, because we embrace no other doctrine than that which first flowed forth of Jerusalem, whose citizens by grace we avow ourselves to be.

But now to the taunting blasphemies of the writer. It pleases him to term our churches new-found, invisible, yet but eight years old, &c., and our gospel newly invented. Which blasphemies, albeit that man spare, yet we are assured the Eternal, our God, will not suffer to be unpunished in this life, and in the life to come, unless that speedy and unfeigned repentance blot away the same.

But the writer being left to the judgment of God, we would know of him why he calls our churches new-found, and our gospel but new invented. He appears to give his reason in these words: "For," says he, "it is manifest, that a thousand years ago, in all the world was there people that believed as they do, who defend the contrary."

This reason contains in it such folly, besides the obscurity and generality of it, that we stand in doubt at what member we shall begin to confute the same. But because his greatest strength appears to stand in this—that a thousand years ago, there were people in all the world that believed otherwise than we believe; to that head we will first answer, and say, that granted, that before a thousand years, there were people in all the world that believed as papists now believe, how shall it therefore be concluded, that our churches are new-found? And will he say, that our gospel is but newly invented? A good dialectician would answer, that albeit the antecedent were granted, the consequent may justly be denied. And the reason is,

because that neither doth the church, the faith of the same, nor the authority of the gospel of Christ Jesus, depend upon that which men believed before it was published. Neither yet is the age of the church to be counted from the time when it pleased God, of his mercy, either to reveal his word to any realm or nation that before was ignorant of it, or yet to reform abuses which have taken root among the people of God by the negligence of men. And that this reason and proposition is true, the consideration of the planting of the church, and of the divers reformations made within the same, shall witness.

When God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans, (Gen. xii.) and made to him the promise of the blessed Seed, and afterwards gave unto him the sign of circumcision; were there not people dispersed universally upon the face of the earth, who believed and thought that they had a good and perfect religion, yea, even that same religion, as they supposed, wherein Noah served God? And yet we know, that the Spirit of God condemned the multitude of that age for idolatry, and therein magnified the mercy of God, who from that corrupted multitude called Abraham, and by grace made him the father of the faithful. Now would we demand of the writer of the letter, if the age of Abraham's faith should have been measured from the error of the multitude that past before him; and if that the age of the church gathered within his house should have been called an eight-year old church, when Abraham had so long obeyed God, while that all the world continued in their idolatry? We demand, we say, if their old idolatry made Abraham's faith to be but a new-found faith; and if their multitude and universality, having for them antiquity, made the church that was in Abraham's house to be a new-found church? We suppose that men of judgment will otherwise pronounce, and subscribe with us, that the faith of Abraham had the same antiquity that the word had which he believed. Now, it is plain, that the word which he believed, was the self-same word which God promised unto the woman in the garden, (Gen. iii.) speaking against the serpent, saying, I shall put enmity betwixt thee and the woman, betwixt thy seed and her Seed; that Seed shall break down thy head, and thou shalt break down his heel. This promise, we say, being especially made to Abraham, in these words,—"In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," was the

ground of his faith, like as that it was the ground of the faith of Adam ; Abel ; Seth ; and of all the faithful before him : so that his faith was no new faith, but was that same faith which had continued among God's elect from the beginning. For true faith may not be measured from the error of men, but from the word and promise which the faithful believe.

Is the word from the beginning, and the promise undoubted? then must the faith that thereupon is grounded, not only be true, but also of the same age and antiquity that the word is. And therefore, whensoever the papists and we shall come to reckon the age of our faith, we doubt nothing but that their faith, in more principal points than one or two, shall be found very young, and but lately invented, in respect of that only true faith which this day in the churches of Scotland is professed. And the self-same thing affirm we of our church, and of the gospel preached within the same ; namely, that the gospel, which of God's mercy is revealed unto us, is not forged by man, but that it is the self-same gospel which Jesus Christ taught by his own mouth, and that his apostles, at his commandment, published unto the world. And therefore we say, that our church is no new-found church, as the writer blasphemously rails, but that it is a part of the holy Church universal, which is grounded upon the doctrine of the prophets and apostles ; having the same antiquity that the Church of the apostles has, as concerning doctrine, prayers, administration of sacraments, and all other things requisite to a particular church.

But yet will the writer of the letter allege, that we believe not as the most part of men have believed a thousand years and more : for they believed the mass to be a sacrifice propitiatory for the sins of the quick and the dead ; the pope to be the head of the Church, and Christ's vicar in the earth ; the material body of Christ Jesus, flesh, blood, and bone, to be in the sacrament of the altar, after that the words of consecration were pronounced by a priest ; that the prayers of the living profit the departed, and such others as the catholic faith of the papists have concluded : these articles, will the writer say, we believe not ; and therefore, how can it be denied but that our church is new-found, and the doctrine thereof is new? We have answered, and yet we answer again, that whatsoever papists have believed before us, which hath no

better ground than the determination of their own councils, can neither prejudge our faith grounded upon God's expressed word, neither yet can prove our church to be but a new-found church. For if a common error, and a superstitious worshipping of God, received of a multitude, should have the strength, that it should prevail against God's simple truth, and against his worshipping prescribed in his word, then had the prophet Elias been in a miserable condition; who, being but one man, opposed himself to the king, to his council, to his prophets, priests, and people, and in plain words accused them all of apostasy from God, from his true worshipping, and from the obedience of his law, and plainly convicted them to be idolaters, because they had embraced a worshipping of God not contained in his word. It is a wonder that the king, with his priests and prophets, excepted not against the prophet, and said, How can that be idolatry, which our kings and people, since the days of Jeroboam, have used and maintained for God's true service? Thou art but one man, and we are a multitude; how can it be that we all should err, and that thou alone shouldest please God? But no such thing find we objected unto the prophet. But his request, being but one man, was obeyed; which was, that God himself should judge betwixt him and them, as He did by fire from heaven.

This privilege crave we to be granted to us of the papists in our days; namely, that they suffer God to judge between our religion and theirs. What he approves, let it be approved of both; and what by him is not commanded, nor by the apostles of Jesus Christ established and practised, let it be of both rejected, and so shall we suddenly agree. But if they will still cry that we are schismatics and apostates, because we refuse to defile ourselves with their abominations, we cannot but appeal from their corrupt sentence to the uncorrupt Judge, of whose favours we are assuredly persuaded in that point, because he hath said, Follow not the multitude in evil doing; and because we find kings, prophets, and people before us, to have done the self-same thing in their days, and therefore to have been approved of God, which we in God's fear have done in our days: namely, they have destroyed the monuments of idolatry, and have repressed the same externally by power and force, notwithstanding the antiquity thereof, and that great multitudes adhered unto it. And this much

for the multitude, and that which the multitude most commonly believeth. Now to the further reasons of the writer.

He first taunts and mocks us, and our church, calling it, Your invisible church of Scotland. Secondly, he affirms that the Church, whereof the prophet speaks, shall be manifest and visible through all the world; and for his proof, alleges the second chapter of the prophet Isaiah. And last, he concludes, in these words: "Wherefore, if ye cannot show in what place of the world three hundred years ago your church was in, it followeth of necessity that it is no church."

To these heads we must answer in order: and first, we will pray the writer, in his next answer, to signify unto us, why he calls the church of Scotland invisible, seeing that the ground and the persons inhabitant within the same, are subject to the senses of all those that list to look upon them. Yea, the doctrine taught unto us is so patent,* that the very enemies themselves are not forbidden to hear and to judge of it. And finally, the administration of the sacraments within our churches is so public, that none justly can complain, that they are either debarred from hearing or from sight. And therefore, howsoever it pleases the writer to delight himself in his own vanity, we fear not to affirm, that the Church of God, within Scotland this day, is as visible as ever it was in Jerusalem, after that Christ Jesus ascended to the heavens, or as it was visible in Samaria after that city had received the gospel. Yea, we will further affirm, that the true Church of Jesus Christ is as visible, yea, and as beautiful in all her proper ornaments this day, within the realm of Scotland, as ever she was in Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, yea, or yet in Rome itself, what time any of the apostles ruled them, or when they were saluted by the apostle in his epistles to the churches: and this much for the first head.

The answer to the second cannot be so short; for his assertion agrees so little with the place of the prophet, that we stand greatly in doubt whether the writer has ever sought to understand the mind of the prophet. His assertion is this:—"Of the Church whereof the prophet speaketh, it is said by him, in the second chapter, that it shall be manifest and visible through all the world." The words of the prophet are these: "It shall be in the last

* Open, manifest.

days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go, and say, Come, let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For the law shall go forth of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people," &c. (Is. ii. 2, &c.) In these words of the prophet, we find no such thing as that the Church shall be manifest and visible through all the world. We acknowledge a promise of glad things to come, to be joined to Jerusalem and unto mount Sion, after the miserable destruction of the same. We find the time appointed, namely, the last days. But that the promise may be the better tried, we must know of the writer,—when these last days began; and when they shall be complete? We must further know, if there be any one certain place appointed, in which it is said, that the Church of God shall be visible and manifest in all ages? These two heads being considered, it will be more easy to judge of the assertion of the writer, and how it agrees with the mind of the prophet.

And first, we think that the writer will not deny, but the last days, whereof the prophet speaks, began long before the gospel of Jesus Christ was known or publicly received in Rome; namely, at the appearing of Jesus Christ in the flesh, when he revealed unto the world the whole will of his Father. For so are we taught by the apostles, saying: "God in old times spake unto our fathers in divers manners by the prophets; in the last days he hath spoken to us by his Son, &c. (Heb. i. 1.) And the apostle Peter, in that his most notable sermon made to Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.), affirms, that the prophecy of Joel, made concerning the pouring forth of God's graces upon all flesh in the last days, was even then completed, when the Holy Spirit had descended down upon those that believed. So then, we have gotten the last days to have begun with Jesus Christ, who is the glory of the second temple. When think we that they ended? If the writer will say, When Rome received the gospel, then was the accomplishment of the last days; as men justly may doubt thereof, so the apostle plainly denies, saying, "The Spirit speaketh evidently, that in the last times some shall

depart from the faith," &c. (1 Tim. iv. 1.) Whereof we may gather, that the apostle appointeth the last times to continue longer than when the gospel was once publicly preached; namely, till that men should begin to fall from the faith, and give ears to the doctrine of devils. Yea, if ye will search the scriptures, ye shall find that the last days continue from the first appearing of Jesus Christ in the flesh, unto his last returning unto judgment. So that the last days do not only include the first publication of the gospel, but also the defection from it; yea, and the restitution of it again unto the world, by the brightness whereof that man of sin should be revealed and destroyed. Whereof we conclude, that if the last days do yet continue, of which the prophet makes mention, the things promised to be performed in them are not yet altogether complete, but are in their progress, and shall so proceed until all be finished that is forespoken by the holy prophets and apostles of Jesus Christ. And so may Jesus Christ this day be working in Scotland, albeit that papists rage against his gospel, as in those days he wrought in Jerusalem, when the priests and the whole visible church, for the most part, raged against the same. But now to the second head.

We would know, if the writer can appoint unto us any one certain place, where this holy mountain of God is promised to remain manifestly and visibly. For this we make known to the whole world, that, for the love we bear to the building and repairing of God's holy house, we have endangered life and all things temporal: and therefore, if the writer can point out to us a certain place whereunto God has made promise, we shall every one exhort another, with all diligence, to go up thereunto. But if he can point out none, as having greater assurance by God's mouth, more than another, then will we charitably desire him to desist from taunting and mockage of so notable works of God, as he of late years has shown in more realms than one. Our Master Christ Jesus appoints us to no one certain place, where we shall be assured of his presence; but rather, forbidding the observation of all places, he sends us to his own spiritual presence, saying, "Wheresoever two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii.) And in another place, "Behold I am with you to the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii.) We, being grounded upon these promises,

have good hope, through Jesus Christ, that in our congregations we have the favourable presence of Jesus Christ, as well in his word, as in his holy sacraments. For in his name alone convene we; by him alone we call upon God our Father; and by him alone we are assured, through the power of his Holy Spirit, to obtain our requests made according to his will.

We wonder greatly that the writer considers not that the promise of the prophet is, that all nations shall come to that holy mountain. We are a nation, how abject soever we appear. Why then will the writer deny unto us free passage to the house of the Lord; seeing that the term of the last days is not yet expired, and seeing that we desire to be taught in the ways of the Lord, and to walk in his paths; yea, seeing that thousands in Scotland refuse not to be rebuked of the Lord, and to suffer him to judge amongst us? If the writer will say so, because we will not acknowledge Rome to be the mother of all other churches, we answer as before: Let us hear the commandment of our God, charging us so to do, and our obedience shall not be long craved. For we are most willing to obey our mother, provided she show the undoubted signs of a natural mother; but a usurped title, without further assurance, we dare not admit. And thus far for his assertion, and for the mind of the prophet.

Now follows his conclusion, in these words: "Wherefore, if ye cannot show what place of the world three hundred years ago your church was in, it followeth of necessity that it is no church, &c." How this conclusion may be rightly gathered of the words of the prophet, we suffer the readers, and the writer himself, to consider. And yet, because that to us it were most grievous, so to be excommunicated that we were no church; that is, no parcel of the holy Church universal; we answer for ourselves, and say, That fifteen hundred years ago our church was in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Antioch, and whersoever Christ Jesus was truly preached, and his blessed gospel obediently received, whether it were among the Jews or Gentiles. There we say was our church, which is not bound to any one place, but is dispersed upon the face of the whole earth; having one God, one faith, one baptism, and one Lord Jesus, the Saviour of all that unfeignedly believe. And so we fear not to receive the title and authority of a particular church, because we have

all things by God's word that thereto appertains. Yea, we are further bold to affirm, that if ever it shall please God to bring the church of Rome to her original purity, she shall not be ashamed to embrace and reverence the poor church of Scotland as her dearest sister, and next resembling her in all things, before that pride and avarice, joined with idleness and riotous living, corrupted her ministers, and the inventions of men were preferred to God's simple truth. We say yet again, that whensoever the church of Rome shall be reduced to that state in which the apostles left it, we are assured that she shall vote in our favour, against all such as shall deny us to be a church, if God continue us in that simplicity which this day is mocked of the world. Now let us hear how the writer proceeds.

Tyrie's Letter.

And swiftly if ye or any of your cunning ministers of your new invented Evangel show me the due succession of his church since Christ, and, by that, agree the manifest contradiction that both I have read and seen with my eyes among the doctors and principals of your new doctrine, I shall not only renounce the sentence which I have held heretofore, but also shall afore all that will hear me, confess my ignorance and fault, and shall employ all my strength to the forthsetting of your religion, &c.

Answer.

Of this part of the writer's letter, and of that which is past before, it is easy to consider, that he will acknowledge no church to be the true Church of Jesus Christ, unless it can show the due succession thereof from the days of Jesus Christ: and further, that the teachers of it do so agree in doctrine, that in no point they be found to differ one from another. We answer, If the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ were bound to these two extremities, the bondage thereof were most miserable; but, because we find our Master Jesus Christ is more favourable to his poor Church, than master Tyrie craves, we are decreed to stand in that freedom and liberty whereunto our Head and only Sovereign Lord has called us.

We find, that He sends not his afflicted Church to seek a lineal succession of any persons before he will receive them; but he, with all gentleness, calls his sheep unto himself, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and

are laden, and I will ease you." (Matt. xi.) And again, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I cast not away." (John vi.) Oh golden and most comfortable sentence, pronounced by Him who cannot lie! Here is no mention of any succession that we should claim to, before we are received of him who is the Head of the Church; but only it is said, That which the Father giveth, and that the Son receiveth, shall not be cast away; neither yet will he lose any that come to him, but that he will save them and raise them up at the last day. And the apostle, speaking of the vocation of the Gentiles, sends them not to seek a succession, but, in the persons of the Ephesians, pronounces this sentence in favour of all that believe in Jesus Christ: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but citizens with the saints and of the household of God: and are builded upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building coupled together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. ii.) Here we find men, who before were strangers, made citizens with the saints and of the household of God; we find them builded upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; we find Jesus Christ to be the chief corner-stone—but we find no mention of any such succession as master Tyrie seems rigorously and without God's commandment to crave. And therefore we cannot but wonder, why any mortal man should crave of us that which neither God the Father, his Son Christ Jesus, neither yet the holy apostles in their ministry, craved of any realm or nation. And therefore, let master Tyrie take this for an answer: That an unjust request may justly be denied.

And yet, lest that the writer, or any other, should think themselves rather mocked than answered, we add to what has been said, That we are able to show the succession of our church directly and lawfully to have flowed from the apostles. And our reason is, because that, in our churches, we neither admit doctrine, rite, nor ceremony, which, by their writings, we find not authorized. And albeit this shall not satisfy the new start-up Jesuits, yet our consciences are at rest, because we are assured to be avowed of the supreme Judge.

The second which he requires is, that we shall agree the manifest contradiction that is amongst the principal

doctors of our new doctrine and late invented gospel. His blasphemy we remit by God's hand to be punished; and yet we would know what doctrine is that which he terms new. Our gospel, as before is said, is that same which Jesus Christ, by himself and by his apostles, manifested unto the world, as all such as hear the form of our doctrine can witness. Where he desires us to agree all controversies among our teachers, we answer, in truth, that we know no controversy in doctrine, especially of that which concerns man's salvation, within the realm of Scotland, but that all the preachers within our church uniformly agree in doctrine and judgment, notwithstanding the diversity of gifts. If master Tyrie would send us to conciliate all controversies that are in Germany and elsewhere, his second petition has no greater reason than had the former; for of God we have no further charge but to watch over that flock which is subject unto us. God has raised and appointed us preachers to the realm of Scotland; in the bounds whereof, if we plant not true doctrine according to the talent committed to our charge, and oppose ourselves to all kinds of errors that may infect the flock, we shall be criminal before God. But that we are precisely bound to run from country to country to agree all controversies, albeit it were even in the matters of religion, we find no express commandment given to us in that behalf of our God. And, therefore, we must desire the inspection of master Tyrie's power, by virtue whereof he may charge us to that painful travail, before that we can promise obedience.

But master Tyrie we know will allege, that in writing his letter, there was no such thing in his mind; but that his meaning was, that because we did not agree fully among ourselves in all heads, therefore he would not be of our church: for that in plain words he declares. Now, all contention laid aside, we will desire master Tyrie, and the rest of his faction, deeply to consider, if they are builded upon a sure foundation, while they have none other cause why they oppose themselves to the truth of God, now of his mercy revealed to the world, but because that such as profess that truth agree not in all heads among themselves. We demand then, What if they had lived in the days of the apostles, when the preaching of Christ Jesus was no less odious to the visible church of the Jews, to the posterity of Aaron and Levi, who then

ruled in Jerusalem, than the light of the gospel has been of late years to that Roman antichrist, and unto such as live by his merchandise? Would master Tyrie, we ask, and his faction, have refused the gospel, because in the bosom of the church there arose great controversy, and that in the especial heads of religion? For, did not some boldly affirm in the church of Antioch, that unless the gentiles were circumcised according to the law of Moses, they could not be saved? (Acts xv.) Which doctrine and affirmation was more dangerous and more slanderous in those days than all the controversies that yet are risen among such as have refused the damnable ways of the papistry, for it concerns the chief head of justification. And will any yet say, that therefore the gospel was not the glad tidings of salvation, and they that embraced it truly, were not the true members of Jesus Christ?

We look that men will be more moderate than some show themselves to be, who, for certain controversies of far less importance than that was, dare boldly condemn the truth and the professors of the same, because, say they, "It is the property of heretics to disagree among themselves:" which sentence, how ancient soever it be, if it should be so understood as the papist does—that is, whosoever disagree among themselves in matters of religion, they are heretics;—if the former sentence (we say) should be so understood, then shall we accuse more of heresy than can be excused in any one age from Christ Jesus to this day. For, did not Paul disagree from Peter? (Gal. ii.) Yea, he did so disagree from him, that he resisted him plainly to his face, because he walked not according to the right way of the truth of the gospel. These were two principal pillars; the one appointed to the Jews, and the other to the Gentiles. What shall we say of the hot contention which fell betwixt Barnabas and Paul, which separated them that before were joined in as strait conjunction as ever were two mortal men upon the earth? (Acts xv.) If master Tyrie and his Jesuits will allege that these were but sudden passions, and did not concern any chief head of doctrine, the Holy Ghost will prove the contrary. For the one touched the conscience of men, concerning the freedom of meats; and the other, the admission of ministers, after that they had once fallen back from that function: which heads were of greater weight in those days (as heretofore we have said) than

any controversy which the papists are able to show to be, or yet to have been, betwixt us that profess the gospel and do abhor their abominations.* Further reasoning of this head, for the present, we omit, and will proceed with master Tyrie's letter.

Tyrie's Letter.

Wherefore, sir, considering that in the church, in the which I am by the grace of God, there is continual succession of doctrine, and that selfsame which is preached now, has been taught in all ages; as it is manifest to any man that has read all ancient writers afore our times. And moreover, I find it spread through all the world, as in like manner it is manifest, and the experience does teach you; for ye will come to no place where Christ's doctrine is received, but ye will find the religion, at least in many persons. Wherefore, if ye cannot show in any other religion the same, it follows evidently that no other religion is the true religion.

Answer.

To this epilogue, and the argument gathered thereof, we answer only this—That of a manifest lie there can no truth be concluded. His manifest and impudent lie, we say, is, he affirms, that in the church in which he is, there is continual succession of doctrine, and that the selfsame which is preached now has been taught in all ages.—This, we affirm, is a most impudent falsehood. For now, and of late years, it hath been taught, and of the people hath been received, that the mass was a sacrifice propitiatory for the sins of the quick and the dead; that the pope was the head of the Church, and such other heads of most heretical doctrine, approved in the papistical church: which heads, we affirm, were unknown in the age of the apostles, and of the fathers that immediately followed them. And for the probation thereof, we desire their writings to be produced, ever beginning at them who were appointed of God to preach, and to plant the verity in the world. We are not bound to credit whatsoever the fathers have spoken: but our faith, as is before said, is builded upon the sure rock, Jesus Christ, and upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. (Eph. ii.) So

* All the reformed churches agreed upon every essential point; there were no differences among them upon the great subjects which concern the salvation of man. See the Harmony of the Confessions of Faith of the principal Reformed Churches, A.D. 1584.

far as any fathers agree therewith, we reverently do embrace it; but if the fathers have affirmed any thing without the warrant of the written word of the Eternal our God, to whose voice only the sheep of his pasture are bound, it is as lawful for us to reject that which proceedeth from man and not from God, as it is easy to them to affirm it. Master Tyrie may know that we use the words of the ancients.

It appears to us, by the whole progress of master Tyrie's letter, that he and his faction can acknowledge no church which, in all ages, has not been visible to the eyes of men, having likewise a visible succession. For, first, he affirms, that the Church, whereof the prophet Isaiah speaks, should be manifest and visible through all the world. And here, last, he alleges, that we can come in no place where we shall not find that religion spread, at the least, in many persons. And thereof he concludes, that if we cannot prove the like of our religion, it follows, that it is not the true religion.

If master Tyrie recant not this assertion, he must correct his creed. And where universally before we use to say, "I believe in the holy Church," he must say, I see the holy Church. For if there be no church upon the face of the earth, but that which is visible, and that which may be first shown by certain external notes, then it were superfluous and vain for us to say, I believe the holy Church universal; but confidently we might affirm, I see the holy Church. If master Tyrie will say, We may both see and believe, and by our sight our faith may be strengthened; for Thomas saw the wounds in the hands feet, and side of Christ Jesus, and believed; and so may we see the Church, and yet believe it. If we should grant so far to master Tyrie, yet were his argument nothing helped; for the question is not, Whether we may notify those things that we are bound to believe? but the question is, Whether we are not bound to believe those things which sometimes are utterly removed from the external senses of men? Master Tyrie will acknowledge no church except that which has been, and is visible. We, on the contrary, acknowledge and reverence the spouse of Christ Jesus, sometimes exiled from the world, receiving sometimes the wings of an eagle that she may flee to the wilderness, where of God, and not of man, she hath her place prepared. (Rev. xii.) We reverence her which doth

complain, that she has been desolate, barren, a captive, and a wanderer to and fro. That spouse of Jesus Christ brags so little of her succession, visible to man's eyes, that she wonders exceedingly who should have nourished her children during the time of her banishment. (Isa. xlix.)

If master Tyrie be so well seen in the ancient writers, as he would show himself to be, then can he not be ignorant, that it is not without great cause that the Holy Ghost hath taught us to say, "I believe the holy Church universal:" namely, because oftentimes it is, that the Church militant is so afflicted, yea, the beauty thereof is so obscured to the most part of the world, that the synagogue of satan usurps the title of the true Church, and Babylon is preferred to Jerusalem; so that the elect are compelled to complain and say, "We see not our own signs, now is there no prophet any more among us." (Ps. lxxiv.) Let the days of Elias and his complaint witness whether the Church of God is always so visible, that it may be pointed forth with the finger of man. Thus we write shortly, to give occasion to master Tyrie, and to such as are blinded with that error, more deeply to consider that article of their belief, and not so rashly to condemn such as God of his mercy calls from darkness to light. Now to the rest of his letter.

Tyrie's Letter.

There are some, I know, perchance for lack either of good discourse or wit, measure the verity of the thing they follow, by the worldly success they have in the following of it.. But surely I cannot esteem you to be of that rank; and if ye were, I would exhort you to read, among the rest, the seventy-second, (seventy-third) psalm, and the hundred and forty-third psalm, whereby ye will easily understand, that neither the prosperous success of your part, in worldly things I mean, proves what ye follow to be of verity, nor yet does our decay and adversity make our part to be convicted; yea, rather, the matter being considered as it ought to be, your prosperity is rather a manifest argument of God's wrath, not of any truth of verity. For it is said by a godly, holy, and cunning† man eleven hundred years by-past, "That there is nothing more truly wretched than the happiness of sinners, since an impunity which is its own punishment is nourished, and the evil will, that inward enemy, is strengthened," &c.*

* Understanding. † Learned.

Answer.

We might have passed by this part without answer, because nothing in it, conceived justly, can be laid to our charge. For our worldly felicity, prosperity, and rest, neither is, neither yet has been, at any time since we have embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ, such as may nourish us in wickedness; neither yet are the papists able to convict us of such impiety, as all the world know has reigned among them more years than a hundred thrice told. And in the mean time, to what honour and worldly dignity they are ascended, we make themselves judges. If they say, the doctrine which we teach is wondrously spread within these hundred years, so that now it has almost rid itself forth of bondage, we would demand of the papists, if the gospel of Jesus Christ ceased to be the doctrine of salvation, when the churches got rest in Judea and elsewhere in the days of the apostles? If they answer, that they mean no such thing; then yet we demand, if the hand of the Lord be more shortened now than it was in the primitive church, so that now He may not as well maintain his truth, and enlarge the kingdom of his only Son, as he did in the days of the apostles? Whatsoever the papists shall answer, we are assured, that neither is his power diminished, so that he may not maintain his truth, neither yet is his love so waxen cold towards his Church, but that he will in his anger remember mercy.

Why do not those cruel men consider, what innocent blood has been shed for the testimony of Christ's gospel within these three-score years? Would they that God at no time should show pity upon the patient suffering of his afflicted Church? Would they that the sword should still devour? Would they that the flaming fires should never be quenched? If they would do so, they show themselves the sons of him who hath been a murderer from the beginning, and yet continues in the same malice. But our God beareth a fatherly affection towards his weak children, whereby he is moved sometimes to stay the fury and rage of satan for a season, to the end that his chosen more gladly may prepare themselves to a new battle. True it is, the doctrine of salvation is greatly enlarged; and thereof we praise God: true it is, that satan has not universally such power to persecute, as before time he had; but will master Tyrie thereof conclude, that in our church

there is no strength? But now to the scriptures which master Tyrie quotes.

True it is, that David, in his seventy-third psalm, (according to the count of the Hebrews,) affirms, that neither the worldly prosperity of the ungodly, nor yet the affliction of the godly, ought to discourage such as fear God. In this general head, we agree with master Tyrie and with all papists. But we affirm, that the notes and signs, which the Holy Ghost gives in that place, by the which the wicked shall be known, do no wise appertain to us; but of many years most evidently have appeared, and to this hour do yet appear, in the pope, and in many of those that maintain his kingdom. For, whether the generation of that Roman antichrist has been exempted from the troubles of men; whether their pride has been as visible as ever were their garments; whether their eyes have started out for fatness; and finally, whether their licentious living, their oppression and presumption, have not plainly declared that they have set their mouth against the Heavens, we are content that the world, (be it ever so blind,) the histories of their lives, (not written by us, but by their own scribes,) and the very experience which all men now have, and heretofore have had, of their proceedings, bear record whether they or we be noted in that psalm. We give master Tyrie to understand, that we are better acquainted with the lives and conversations of the popes and cardinals than they think us to be; and that we know the strength of their laws, decrees, statutes, and councils better than the Jesuits know the rules of Jesus, albeit presumptuously they have usurped his name. And therefore we will crave of master Tyrie and of all his faction, that in writing either to us or to such as they would persuade, that they use truth and simplicity; and so shall they find themselves better contented, in reading of our answers. For this, before the Lord Jesus, we protest, that it is the truth which we teach, and wherein we delight; the love whereof causes us to abhor all man's invention, superstition, and idolatry. And thus far to the answers of the scriptures which master Tyrie quotes.

Now to the sentence of the ancient writer, whose name he suppresses, we answer, That his words cut the throats of the proud papists of that age, and of all their followers since those days. For then began the tail of the dragon to draw the stars from the heaven to the earth; (Rev. xii.)

then began the fountains, which before time gave clear and wholesome water, to become bitter, yea, to be turned unto blood: and yet did they prosper in all worldly felicity, which was the cause that many godly men, lamenting the public corruption, were compelled to pronounce that and like sentences against the very churchmen who then lived. And lest master Tyrie should think that we affirm this without authority, we refer him to the writings of Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Bernard, and others, who were neither come long before nor after the time that he notes; whose writings, if he shall diligently examine, he will find what was their judgment of the seat of Rome in their days. And what others, that after followed, added to the former impiety of their fathers, from the day that once the popes were decorated, or rather deformed, with a triple crown, let the writers of all ages since bear witness.

And lest master Tyrie shall think that we put him to too much pain, when we send him to all writers in general, we shall relieve him somewhat, and appoint him to two only, whom justly he cannot suspect to have been corrupted by us. The one is abbot Joachim, a man aforetime of great authority and reputation among the papists; the other is Joannes Aventinus, historiographer, whose history was printed by command and with privilege of the emperor Charles the fifth.* Let the writings, we say, of these two, bear witness what has been the judgment of divers men in divers ages, of Rome, of the pride of the prelacy, of their corruption in life and doctrine, and, finally, of their defection from the truth.

Abbot Joachim, writing upon the words of the Revelation of St. John,† "The sixth angel poured forth his vial upon the great flood Euphrates," &c. has this sentence: "That if," saith he, "the waters of this flood, which is called Euphrates, be people, nations, and tongues that obey the

* John Aventin was born in Bavaria, A. D. 1456, and was the author of several historical works. The Jesuits have alleged that he was a Lutheran in sentiment, as they desire to weaken the force of his testimony against the evil conduct of the popes and the vicious lives of the Romish priests.

† Joachim, abbot of Corazzo, and afterwards of Flora, in Calabria, was born in the twelfth century. He was revered by the people as a saint and a prophet. He wrote some mystical commentaries upon the scriptures, in which he spoke of the necessity of a reformation in the church, and animadverted strongly upon the corrupt state in which it then was. The comment on the Revelation has been ascribed to one of his disciples.—*See Dupin, Cent.* xiii.

Roman empire, for the city of Rome itself is new Babylon," &c This, and that which follows as to the drying up of the waters, evidently shows what was the judgment of the writer, in his days, of Rome; namely, that it was become new Babylon. And lest any should think that the author means the ancient Roman empire, and not the government of the church that was in it, or in the dominion thereof, he explains himself afterwards, while he interprets the great harlot, and the kings of the earth, who commit whoredom with her. The great harlot, he says, the universal Fathers affirmed to be Rome: not, says he, as concerning the congregation of the just, which sometimes was a pilgrim in it, but as concerning the multitude of the reprobate, who by their wicked works blaspheme and impugn the same church, being a pilgrim with her. Let master Tyrie mark, that the writer saw in Rome two churches: the harlot, and her multitude dispersed in all the places of that empire; and the church which was a stranger, blasphemed and impugned by the multitude. And yet afterwards, he explains himself more plainly, saying,—"The prelates, to whom the government of souls is committed, are called the kings of the earth, of whom, nevertheless, some commit fornication with Babylon, because that they, for the pleasure of men, neglect and despise the commandment of God." And lest that any should think that such a sentence had recklessly escaped him, he doubles the same words over again, saying, "It is before said, that the prelates of the churches are the kings of the earth, of whom some commit whoredom with Babylon." He proceeds further, saying that which follows, "And the merchants of the earth were made rich of the power of her pleasures; that is to be referred to the false priests and hypocrites, who, making merchandize of the kingdom of God, gape for temporal advantage," &c. And after a little, upon the words, "The merchants of the earth shall mourn," &c. he says, "The merchants of the earth, as is before said, are the brutish priests, who know not those things that appertain to God; sensual priests, who are placed in the outward court, that they may eat the sins of the people; who sell prayers and masses for money, making the house of prayer a shop of merchandize, yea, making it, I say, a public and open market, and a den of thieves," &c.

If master Tyrie, or any others of that sect, blame us for

railing, as commonly they use to do when we speak the truth, then let him and them consider, that we learned not of Martin Luther what kind of men the papists were, but that which we speak and affirm now, we have received of the papists themselves. For this has been the merciful providence of God towards his little flock ever from the beginning, that when a universal corruption began to spread itself, then were raised some, as it were one or two among the whole multitude, to admonish the present age, and the posterities to come, how far men had declined from the original purity, that at least God might have some testimony that the verity of God was not altogether buried in the earth. But now, let us hear the judgments of others.

Such as are anything acquainted with the histories of antiquity, cannot be ignorant how vehement was the contention betwixt Nicholas the first and certain of the bishops of Germany, about the divorce and second marriage of Lotharius, king of Hungary. Which of the two parties had the just action, we dispute not; but what were the crimes laid to the pope in those days we shall shortly touch. After that Tetogandus and Guntherus, who were the two chief bishops that opposed themselves to the pride of the Roman bishop, had largely cleared themselves of all things wherewith he charged them, they entered into most bitter accusation of the said Nicholas the pope.* After other things, they laid to his charge, that most tyrannically he had oppressed the liberty of the spouse of Jesus Christ. And after they had rehearsed the principal ornaments wherewith the true Church was decorated, they say, "Which benefits thou as a murderer cuttest off, and takest away from the Church of God, transferring them unto thyself. Thou showest the person of a pastor, but plainly thou playest the tyrant: under the habit and clothing of a shepherd, we feel the cruelty of a wolf. The title lies, for it calls thee Father, but thou thyself in thy works showest the thundering of Jupiter, &c. And therefore, (say they,) we know not thy voice, we regard not thy statutes, neither yet fear we thy bulls or thunderings. If thou pretendest to interdict us, we fear not to cut thy throat with thy own sword; for the Holy Ghost is author of all the churches, wheresoever they are dispersed upon

* A full account of this affair is given by Fleury, Hist. Ecc. liv. 50.

the face of the earth."* This was the judgment of many others than those before mentioned, of the seat of Rome in those days, about eight hundred years after the ascension of Christ; and how the pride and iniquity of that seat augmented, as also the free speaking of men against the same, what follows will declare.

What a lamentable tragedy was played betwixt Hildebrand, called Gregory the seventh, and Henry the fourth, emperor of Rome, more historiographers than one or two do witness.† Neither yet do those writers who were most addicted to the faction of the pope, namely, Gerochus, and Paulus, so cover the shame of that deceiver, but that they give sufficient light to men, to see what mischief lurked within the bosom of that pestilent seat. For writing what the said Hildebrand did, what time he was first deposed from that seat, which by craft and without all order he usurped, they say that he spared not largely to bestow the patrimony of the church upon soldiers, and upon captains of war, even that treasure by which the poor chiefly should have been sustained; yea, they affirm, that he showed himself more rigorous against the emperor than it became a pastor to have done. If this were their judgment who took upon them to defend his action and cause, what think we was the judgment of others? That shall we better understand by his accusation, and by the sentence pronounced against him by all the bishops of France and Germany, who, with one voice, concluded, that Hildebrand was ambitious, perjured, a usurper of the emperor's authority; one that violated and brake the concord of the church; and therefore, that he was unworthy of that seat. This sentence was pronounced to his own face, while he was sitting in council in Rome, by one Rulandus, chief priest of Parma, who boldly, and without any salu-

* Aventin. lib. iv. fol. 428.

† The emperor Henry IV., after having had differences with the popes, was deposed by Gregory VII., usually called pope Hildebrand, a most wicked and unprincipled character. Being compelled to submit, Henry went to Italy in the depth of winter, (A. D. 1077,) and appeared at the gates of Canossa, where the pope then was, barefooted and bareheaded, without his princely robes, and with a scourge in his hand. Admission was refused, and the emperor was kept in this state, attended by his wife and child, three days and three nights in the open air, exposed to the frost and snow! On the fourth day, the pope was prevailed upon by his paramour to admit the emperor; Henry having delivered up his crown and authority to the pope, and having implored pardon upon his knees, Gregory gave him absolution! Such was popery in the eleventh century!—*See Fox.*

tation, offering the decree of the council, together with the emperor's letters, said, "This Hildebrand is no bishop, no father, no pastor: he is a thief, a wolf, a murderer, a tyrant; and therefore let him be deposed," &c.

We are not ignorant that hereof ensued great tumult, sedition, and trouble. But as that cleared not his former infamy, so did it not stop the mouths of many, plainly to pronounce what judgment they had of him and of that seat; namely, That he, under the title of Christ, did the very work of the antichrist; that he sat in the temple of God, which was then become Babylon; that he was worshipped and extolled above all that was called God; that he gloried as if he could not err, &c. These, and other crimes of no less weight, were laid, in that age, to the bishops and seat of Rome; and this was beyond the term of three hundred years, within which master Tyrie would limit the doctrine of our church. But let us hear further.

As the practices of the bishops of Rome were more and more espied, the bishops of Germany assembled themselves in council at Ratisbon, where the archbishop of Saltzburg, in his most vehement oration which he made against the authors of sedition, among other things, pronounced this sentence against the bishops and seat of Rome. "Christ our Saviour," says he, "most diligently forewarned us to beware of false Christs, and false prophets, whom he willed us to discern and know by their works, whom at present, unless we are more than blind, we may see. For these Roman priests (he notes the whole rabble) make war against all christians, sometimes malapertly, sometimes craftily, and by deceit they still continue war upon war; they themselves, being made great, murder and slay the sheep; briefly, they take peace and concord from the earth." And after a little, in the same oration, which is to be found in the seventh book of the history aforesaid,* he says, "Hildebrand, a hundred and seventy years before, first, under appearance of religion, laid the foundation of the empire of the antichrist. He first began this unhappy war, which to this day is continued by his successors." He proceeds further, and says, "Believe the man that has experience: these priests of Babylon desire to reign alone; they shall not cease until such time as they have oppressed the honour of the

* Aventin. lib. vii. This address of Eberhard is given at length by De Mornay, p. 808.

Roman empire: and consequently, the true pastors that would feed the flock being oppressed, and the barking dogs being removed, they shall extinguish the truth, they shall murder, and tread all things under their feet; they shall sit in the temple of God, and be extolled above all that is worshipped," &c.

These, and many other grave sentences, were pronounced by the said Eberhardus, and were ratified and confirmed by the whole bishops and senate of Germany; whereby it is evident what judgment that age had of the bishops of Rome and their colleges. To avoid further prolixity, we omit the oration and judgment of Probus, the bishop of Tullos ;* the public edict set forth against the pope and against his practices in the days of Lewis the fourth, the emperor ;† together with the judgments of many others, which such as are exercised in reading of histories may note. So that, if master Tyrie, or any of his sect, shall after this accuse us, that we are the first who have disclosed that man of sin, the most ancient writers shall convict him, and clear us. Now shortly to the rest of his letter.

Tyrie's Letter.

Since my departing from you I have seen sundry congregations, specially in Germany, professing, as they pretended, the true word of God and his gospel; but, in verity, betwixt them theirselves, and them and you, I find so great difference and repugnance in matters of great consequence, that if there were no other argument to let me not depart from the catholic church, in which I was baptized, that were sufficient, &c.

Answer.

When master Tyrie shall accuse, in special, wherein the congregations in Germany differ among themselves, and that we differ from them, then shall we show our judgments, whether the difference be of such importance that it ought to dissolve the unity of the church. The confession of our faith, and the order of our church, are open to all that list to read the same. When either he, or any

* At the council of Wurtzburg, A. D. 1287, see De Mornay.

† Or rather Lewis the fifth, elected emperor A. D. 1314. For the particulars of his disputes with the papacy, see Fleury, liv. 92, 93, 94.

other, shall oppugn any one or two heads of the same, so long as God pleases to retain in this miserable life, such as of his mercy he has made his ministers, to blow the trumpet of his judgments to this most wicked generation, neither he, nor any other, that please to oppose themselves to our confession, shall long crave an answer; an answer, we say, of any one or two heads which they please to oppugn. For master Tyrie ought to understand, that the preaching ministers within the realm of Scotland are oxen, ever labouring under the yoke, and that in the husbandry of the Lord; and therefore they can have no time vacant from their necessary cures, to compass countries with the Jesuits, (who are subject to none other yoke than to that of their own election,*) to espy what faults they can find among the congregations. As we have no time, we say, to consider all trifles that offend delicate men, who can acknowledge no church but that which in all points is absolute and perfect; so, albeit that we did both consider them and condemn them, yet we usurp no authority above our brethren, but refer all men to their own judge, and do reverence all congregations, who agree with us in the principals of our faith, as the particular churches of Jesus Christ. Albeit in all ceremonies there is not uniformity; yea, and albeit that in some heads of doctrine also there appear repugnance, yet will we not break brotherly concord, providing that we agree in the principals. Principals, we call those heads of doctrine, without the confession and consent whereof the church was not planted. By these few words master Tyrie, if he be wise, may understand what we mean: and so we proceed to the conclusion of his letter.

Tyrie's Letter.

Wherefore, Sir, I exhort you, as I began, to think on this matter as deeply as it becomes a christian man; and, when you have so done, advertise me of your sentiment. In the mean time, I shall pray Almighty God by his grace to illuminate your spirit, to know in this matter the right way, and to give fortitude and strength, when ye have

* The other Romish ecclesiastical orders have many rules and strict devotional observances to fulfil, but the Jesuits are freed from those burdens, and even from the daily drudgery of reciting from the breviary the service of the day. These indulgences are expressly permitted, that they may be the more active in promoting the interests of the papacy, to which they vow unqualified obedience.

known it, to profess it so far as shall be convenient to your estate and salvation. Having no further occasion of writing, I commit you to the protection of Almighty God.

Written at Paris, the 6th of December, by your most humble servitor and brother,

JAMES TYRIE.

If ye please to answer, ye may send your writing to the baillie of Errol, who will cause it to be sent to me.

Answer.

Against this exhortation will we object nothing; for our earnest desire is, that men diligently consider what doctrine they embrace, what foundation and ground their faith has, and, finally, what way they follow, thinking thereby to attain to eternal felicity. For this careless security, that universally may be espied in men, we condemn, and ever have condemned. But this we fear not to affirm, as before we have written; that the doctrine of the papistical church, now many years by-past, hath been altogether corrupt; that their opinion, which they call their catholic faith, has no sure ground in the word of God; and that the way, which they for the most part have followed, was the very way of perdition to all such as without true repentance departed this life in that blindness; and much more shall it be so to all persons and estates that now shall maintain those abominations, because the light is come, and has sufficiently declared the former darkness. That man of sin is so manifestly revealed, that excuse of ignorance there resteth none; but fearful judgment abides all such, that yet further will follow his damnable ways.

Thus, Sir, ye have our judgment, which albeit ye shall receive later than ye would, yet, the state of time being considered, we doubt not but ye shall interpret all things to the best. Use our letter so, we pray you, that it may come to the knowledge of the writer to you, whose conversion he no less seeks than he appears to seek yours. And thus we heartily commit you to the protection of the omnipotent.

Of Edinburgh, the 10th day of August, A. D. 1568.

TO THE FAITHFUL READER.

What malice, envy, and hatred of the truth, has moved men to burst forth against me, and my behaviour in Scotland, England, and elsewhere, I little regard. For a good conscience sustains me, before my God, against all the odious lies that have been laid to my charge now many years past; for the which, I doubt not but the blasphemers shall answer, (unless repentance prevent judgment,) when the secrets of hearts shall be disclosed.

The cause that I add this imperfect letter to the former discourse is, that they, whom satan hath not blinded by envy, may see and understand what a troubled conscience craves in the day of battle. Because that God now in his mercy hath put an end to the battle of my dear mother, mistress Elizabeth Bowes, before he put an end to my wretched life, I could not cease but declare to the world what was the cause of our great familiarity and long acquaintance; which was neither flesh nor blood, but a troubled conscience upon her part, which never suffered her to rest but when she was in the company of the faithful, of whom, from the first hearing of the word at my mouth, she judged me to be one.

Now, seeing her battle is ended, and I am upon the point shortly to follow, this I leave to posterity, for discharge of my conscience, and to the instruction of her children: That in Scotland, England, France, and Germany, I have heard the complaints of divers that feared God, but of the like conflict as she sustained, from the time of her first acquaintance, and long before, as her own mouth oftener than once confessed to me, till this hour, I have not known. For her temptation was not in the flesh, nor for any thing that appertained to flesh, no, not when she was in greatest desolation, but it was in spirit; for satan did continually buffet her, that remission of sins in Christ Jesus appertained not unto her, by reason of her former idolatry and other iniquities: for the which, notwithstanding any worldly comfort, I have seen her, not for a start but in long continuance, pour forth tears, and send to God dolorous complaints, oftener than ever I heard man or woman in my life: her company to me was comfortable, yea, honourable and profitable, for she was to me and mine a mother; but yet it was not

without some cross: for besides trouble and fasherie of body sustained for her, my mind was seldom quiet, for doing somewhat for the comfort of her troubled conscience, whereof this rude letter is the least, and of basest* argument, among many which lie beside me, and so must do by reason of my inability in more sorts than one. I heartily salute and take my good-night of all the faithful in both the realms, earnestly desiring the assistance of their prayers, that without any notable slander to the gospel of Jesus Christ I may end my battle; for as the world is weary of me, so am I of it.

Of St. Andrew's, the 12th of July, 1572.

JOHN KNOX.

Lord, be merciful to England and Scotland, for we stand both in a dangerous estate, and that because we would not obey thy wholesome admonitions, which were thine, how contemptible soever the persons of thy messengers were. Yet, Lord, remember mercy for thy truth's sake, Amen, Amen. And give us not to the opprobrium of thy enemies, of whom the castle of Edinburgh are the principal, within this realm. Convert them, Lord, or else confound them, that the world may once again understand that thou art a true and a righteous God. Amen, Amen, Amen.

Here followeth the letter, as it passed from my hand at Dieppe, the 20th of July, 1554.

To his loving mother, mistress Elizabeth Bowes, troubled in spirit, whom God comfort for his great mercy's sake. Amen.†

PSALM LXXIX.—*Rise, Lord, stretch out thy hand, forget not the sobs of the oppressed.*

Right dearly beloved mother in our Saviour Jesus Christ, now is our dolour, appointed by God, and forespoken by his prophets, come upon us as the dolour of a woman in the birth of her first child; and so is it come, as with your ears, both openly and privately, oftentimes you have heard declared.‡ When I remember your great infirmity, and the strong battle that continually you fight,

* Feeblest.

† The notes to this letter are in the margin of the original edition.

‡ The most part of John Knox's preaching in the last days of king Edward was of troubles approaching.

and call to my mind how small comfort you have in earth, I am compelled to sob and groan to Him that only may give strength, comfort, and consolation, without help of any creature, unto you in these most dolorous days. And good hope I have that my petition shall not be repelled, but, for Christ Jesus' sake, accepted and granted ;* albeit not in such sort as you and I most gladly would, yet, I doubt not, but in such sort we shall obtain it, as his glory and our everlasting comfort and profit require.

It has not been without the most special providence and favour of God, that these many days by-past you have been grievously tempted, and sorely assaulted, to revolt and turn back again to that abominable and blasphemous idolatry, which now in God's anger is erected, before the uttermost of his plagues be poured forth upon the stubborn and disobedient, which never would delight in the truth of his word, (2 Thess. ii. 10.) and, therefore, of his just judgments, most justly has he given them over, according to their hearts' desire, to delight in lies, to their eternal condemnation. In the days, I say, dearly beloved mother, that there was no appearance that ever such abominations should have taken place so suddenly within this realm of England, you were tempted, and assaulted, to turn back again to idolatry ;† which tempting spirit God, our heavenly Father, permitted to trouble you, partly, for that he would have you exercised in the battle, before the great danger approached, lest, perchance, that you might have been overthrown, if unprovidedly both occasion and temptation at once had assaulted you ; and partly, that by continual repugnance,‡ you might learn how odious is all kind of idolatry in the sight of God. For satan seldom tempts but in those things wherewith he knows God most to be offended ; as pride, lust, covetousness, adultery, idolatry, and such others ; the committers whereof, and continuers in the same, Paul pronounces to have no portion in the kingdom of God. (Gal. v.)

This is my hope, beloved mother, that in your continual battle, so far you have profited, that in this case, almost,

* I praise my God, he has shown his mercy on her and me, in despite of satan, if my battle were at an end as hers is.

† Let England take heed ; for the last Mary shall be worse than the first, if papists proceed. (The papists formed repeated conspiracies for the dethronement or assassination of queen Elizabeth, that Mary of Scotland might reign in her stead.)

‡ Mrs. Elizabeth Bowes tempted still and yet fighting.

you need no admonition of me. But because it is my bounden duty, not only by a common christian charity, but also for that most unfeigned familiarity and tender love, according to godliness, that we have kept since our first acquaintance,* to do the uttermost of my power for your comfort; by pen, therefore, will I write, (because we are now put asunder, to meet again at God's pleasure,) that which by mouth, and face to face, you have often heard. If man or angel shall labour to bring you back from the profession that once you have given, let them, in that behalf, be accursed, and in no part concerning your faith and religion obeyed of you. If any trouble you above measure, whether they be magistrates or carnal friends, they shall bear their just condemnation, unless they suddenly repent: but whosoever it be that shall provoke or solicit you to that abominable idol, resist you all such boldly to the end; learning of the Holy Ghost not to defile the temple of God with idols, neither yet to give your bodily presence unto them, but, obeying God more than man, avoid all appearance of iniquity.

The necessity that every man hath so to do, that willingly would not deceive himself, I remit, partly, to that which oft you have heard, and, partly, to a general letter,† by me written in great anguish of heart, to the congregations; of whom I hear say, a great part, under pretence that they may keep faith secret in the heart and yet do as idolaters do, begin now to fall before that idol. But, oh, alas! blinded and deceived are they, as they shall know in the Lord's sharp visitation, which, so assuredly as our God liveth, shall shortly apprehend those back-starters among the midst of idolaters.‡ With earnest grief of heart I write: better it had been unto them never to have known the truth, than so suddenly, with God's great dishonour, to have returned to their vomit. God, of his infinite mercy, grant unto them sudden repentance; for if the sin sleep long, I fear it shall awake to their perpetual confusion.

But now, dear mother, comfort you my heart (God grant you may) in this my great affliction and dolorous

* I had made a faithful promise, before witnesses, to Margery Bowes, her daughter; and so as she took me for son, I heartily embraced her as my mother.

† Frequent letters written by John Knox, to decline from idolatry.

‡ Let truth this day speak of more than one or two within that realm.

pilgrimage. Continue stoutly to the end, and bow you never before that idol, and so will the rest of worldly troubles be to me more tolerable. With my own heart I often commune; yea, and, as it were comforting myself, I appear to triumph, that God will never suffer you to fall in that rebuke.* Sure I am, that both you would fear and shame to commit that abomination in my presence, who am but a wretched man, subject to sin and misery like to yourself. But, O dear mother, though no earthly creature should be offended with you, yet fear you the presence and offence of Him, who, present in every place, searches the very heart and reins; whose indignation, once kindled against the disobedient, (and no sin more inflameth his wrath than idolatry,) no creature in heaven, nor yet in earth, that only is creature, is able to appease the same. And therefore, dear mother, avoid and flee from it, even as from the death everlasting. Very love and careful solicitude, which, God knoweth, my heart taketh for you, compelleth me so oftentimes to double and rehearse one thing, being uncertain when God shall grant any opportunity to visit you again. But the Spirit of the Lord Jesus shall, by his own omnipotent and yet invisible power, supply in you that which lacketh of worldly comfort, that the glory may be known to be God's alone; who, for a time, comforts, sustains, and feeds one creature by another, but in the end he draws us, his own image, unto himself, that by him alone, without the help of any other, we may live, rejoice, reign, and triumph, as he has promised by Jesus Christ his Son. (John xvi.)

One thing will I not conceal from you, dear mother, that neither are we sure, neither yet in our hearts can we glorify God, as our duty requires, so long as we have the carnal comfort and defence of creatures with us. The whole man, in body and soul, shall evidently prove this conclusion. For that body, that liveth by meat, drink, sleep, clothing, and nourishment, we see it subject to infirmity, yea, to mutability and sin, as the final death of every man declares: and the soul, even of God's very elect, living by the lively word of the heavenly Father, having a teacher that carries flesh, is always flowing, and troubled with some fear, as in Christ's apostles and many others most manifestly we are instructed. But when every earthly creature ceases, then shall the sufficiency of

* I praise his mercy who suffered me not to be deceived.

God's Spirit work his own work. And, therefore, beloved mother, fear not the battle that you sustain, neither yet the infirmity that you find either in flesh or spirit; only abstain from external iniquity, that you make not your members servants to sin, and your imperfection shall have no power to condemn you; for Christ's perfection is reputed to be yours by faith, which you have in his blood. Be assured, mother, I willingly would not deceive you: if any such infirmity were damnable, long ago I would have shown you the truth. But no more than God is displeased, when sometimes the body be sick and subject to diseases—no more is he offended, albeit the soul in that case be diseased and sick. And as the natural father will not kill the body of the child, albeit through sickness it faint, and abhor comfortable meats; no more (and much less) will our heavenly Father kill our souls, albeit, through spiritual infirmity and weakness of our faith, sometimes we refuse the lively food of his comfortable promises. Where contempt of God is by his grace removed, and a love of justice and of the life to come ingrafted in the heart, there is the infallible seal and testimony of the Holy Ghost, who shall perform his work in due season; for the power of God is known in our infirmity. (2 Cor. xii.) And thus commit I you to the protection of Him who by grace has called you from darkness to light, by faith has purged your conscience and heart, and of his free mercy shall glorify you, according to his promise made to those that obediently receive the message of life, in Christ Jesus our Lord (John iii.), whose omnipotent Spirit rest with you for ever and ever.

At Dieppe, the 20th of July, 1554; after that I had visited Geneva, and other parts, and returned to Dieppe to learn the estate of England.

Postscript.—My own estate can I not well declare, but God shall guide the footsteps of him that is wilsome;* and shall feed him in trouble that never greatly solicited for the world. If any collection might be made among the faithful, it were no shame to me to receive that which Paul refused not in his trouble. But all I remit to His providence, who careth for his own. Rest yet in Christ. Your son with troubled heart, JOHN KNOX.

* Willing, obedient.

SOME EXTRACTS

FROM

AN ANSWER TO A GREAT NUMBER OF BLASPHEMOUS CAVILLATIONS, WRITTEN BY AN ADVERSARY TO GOD'S ETERNAL PREDESTINATION, AND CONFUTED

BY JOHN KNOX,

MINISTER OF GOD'S WORD IN SCOTLAND.*

PROV. xxx.—There is a generation that are pure in their own conceit, and yet are not washed from their filthiness.

The Preface.

AMONGST the manifold blessings wherewith God hath blessed his chosen children, whom before all beginning of times he hath predestinated to life in Christ Jesus, (Eph. i. 3,) it is not the least, (most dear brethren,) that he hath given unto us plain advertisement how diversely unto divers persons, shall be the effect and operation of his word so oft as it is offered unto the world. Namely, that as He himself was appointed by his heavenly Father, and forespoken of by the prophets, to be the stone of offence, the stumbling block, and a snare to the two houses of Israel; and yet that he should be to others the sanctuary of honour, the rock of refuge, and author of liberty; so should his word, I say, truly preached, be to some foolishness and the savour of death, and yet unto others it should be the sweet odour of life; the wisdom and power of God, and that to salvation, to all those who believe. (2 Cor. ii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 28.)

I do not purpose at this present to entreat or to reason how and why it is, that God's eternal word, which in itself is always one, worketh so diversely in the hearts of those to whom it is offered; but my only purpose is, in few words, to admonish us, to whom it hath pleased God of his own free mercy, more plainly to reveal the mysteries

* The title and preface of this work state the object and the cause why it was written. It was printed on the continent in 1560, and extends to considerable length, (450 pages,) containing a minute review of all the arguments of "the adversary," which are reprinted with Knox's answers, section by section. As it would exceed the limits of this collection, and not be generally interesting, extracts only are given.

of our redemption, than he hath done to many ages before us, not to esteem this a small and common blessing of God, that we have not only his truth, but also the effect and operation of the same, confirmed to us by the experience of all ages. Great and infinite is that benefit of God, and rightly can it never be weighed whensoever he doth offer his truth unto the world. But such is either the dulness of man, or else his extreme ingratitude, that he will not acknowledge the face of the verity, shine it ever so bright. (John i. 5.) The ingratitude of the Jews is hereof unto us a sufficient witness. For although they had long looked for the promised Messias and Saviour, yet nevertheless, when he came with wondrous signs and works supernatural, they not only did not know him, but also refusing, and utterly denying him, they hanged him between two thieves upon a cross. (Matt. xxvii. 38 ; Acts ii. 23.) The cause hereof in some part we know to be the carnal liberty which they thirsted after, and their preconceived opinion of worldly glory ; which because Christ Jesus appeared not to satisfy according to their fancy and expectation, therefore they contemptuously refused him, and with him all God's mercies offered unto them. Which fearful example, dear brethren, is to be observed by us. For by nature it is evident, that we are no better than they were. And as touching the league and society with God, which prerogative long made them blessed, we are far inferior unto them. For in comparison of that league made with Abraham, the time is short that the Gentiles have been avowed for God's people and the beloved spouse of Christ Jesus. Yea, Paul feareth not to call them the very natural branches, and us the branches of a wild olive. And therefore if their contempt was so punished that blindness yet remaineth upon them, what ought we to fear ? They, not considering the office of Christ, and the cause of his coming, were offended with his presence and doctrine. And doth any man think that we are free from the same dangers ? Few shall be found that in mouth praise not the verity, and every man appears to delight in liberty ; but such companions do follow both the one and the other, in this life, that both are despised and called in doubt when they are offered most plainly to the world.

To speak this matter somewhat more plainly.—It is a thing (as I suppose) by many confessed, that after

darkness, light hath appeared. But, alas! the vices that have abounded in all estates and conditions of persons; the terrible cruelty which has been used against the saints of God; and the horrible blasphemies which have been, and daily are, vomited forth against Christ Jesus and his eternal verity, have given (and justly may give) occasion to the imprudent beholder of such confusion, to prefer the darkness of superstition which before time did reign, to the light of salvation, which God of his great mercy hath now of late years offered again to the unthankful world.

For what natural man can think that the justice * of faith, plainly and truly preached, should be the occasion of sin? That grace and mercy offered, should inflame the hearts of men with rage and cruelty? And that God's glory being declared, should cause men impudently to utter their venom and blasphemies against him who hath created them? The natural man, I say, cannot perceive how these inconveniences should follow God's word, and therefore do many disdain it, a great number deny it, and few, as it becomes, do embrace it with reverence. But such as with grave judgment shall consider what was the common manner of living when Christ Jesus himself, by preaching and working, called men to repentance—what was the treatment of his dearest servants whom he sent forth to preach the glad tidings of his death and resurrection—and what horrible sects followed and daily did spring, after the publication of that joyful atonement made between God and man by Christ Jesus, by his death, resurrection, and ascension:—such, I say, as diligently do observe these former points, shall not only have matter sufficient to glorify God for his graces offered, (be the lives of men ever so corrupted, and the confusion that thereof ensues ever so fearful,) but also they shall have just occasion more steadfastly to cleave to the truth, whose force and effect they see always to have been one from the beginning.

The givers of these offences shall no doubt sustain the woe pronounced against them by Christ Jesus. (Matt. xviii.) But yet must the children of God understand, that of necessity it is that such offences come, (1 Cor. xi. 19,) that the elect may first be tried, and afterwards be partakers of that blessing pronounced by our Master in these words, "Blessed is he that is not offended in me." (Luke

* Righteousness.

vii. 23.) The cause of these my former words, is, that as satan ever from the beginning hath declared himself an enemy to the free grace and undeserved love of God, so hath he now, in these last and corrupted days, most furiously raged against that doctrine, which attributes all the praise and glory of our redemption to the eternal love and undeserved grace of God alone. (Eph. ii. 8.)

By what means satan first drew mankind from the obedience of God the scripture doth witness. Namely, by pouring into their hearts that poison—that God did not love them; and by affirming that by transgression of God's commandments they might attain to felicity and joy; so that he caused them to seek life where God had pronounced death to be. This same practice satan ever from the beginning has used, to infect the Church with all kinds of heresy; as the writings of Moses, of the prophets, of the apostles, and of the godly in the primitive Church do plainly witness.

But, alas! to such blasphemy the devil never did draw mankind, as now of late days, in which no small number are become so bold, so impudent, and so irreverent, that they fear not openly to affirm God to be unjust, if he in his eternal counsel has elected more of one sort of men than another, to life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord; which thing of late days is more plainly come to our knowledge than before we could have suspected; and that by the sight of a book most detestable and blasphemous, containing, as it is entitled, "The Confutation of the Errors of the Careless by Necessity." With that odious name do they burden all those who either do teach, or believe, the doctrine of God's eternal predestination. Which book, written in the English tongue, doth contain, as well the lies and the blasphemies imagined by Sebastian Castalio, and laid to the charge of that most faithful servant of God, John Calvin; as also the vain reasons of Pighius, Sadoletus, and George Siculus, who were pestilent papists and declared enemies of God's free mercies.*

* Castalio professed the protestant faith, and for some time was intimate with Calvin; but, differing from him upon the important doctrines here adverted to, he afterwards became a decided opponent of the Helvetian divines, who wrote against him with much acrimony. He was an able scholar, and made an elegant Latin version of the Bible, but took unwarrantable liberties with the original, and his translation has been justly censured as feeble, turgid, and paraphrastic. (See F. Simon.) Pighius was a Dutch theologian,

The despiteful railing of the book, and the manifest blasphemies contained in the same, together with the earnest requests of some godly brethren, moved me to prepare an answer to the same. Others, I doubt not, might have done it with greater dexterity; but with reverence and fear I lay the talent committed to my charge, upon the table of the Lord, to bring to his church such advantage as his godly wisdom hath appointed.

But lest that some should think that my labours might have been bestowed in some other exercise, I thought it expedient to admonish all my brethren, and charitably to require of them not to esteem the matter to be of small weight and importance. For, seeing that God's free grace is openly impugned and disdainfully refused, I judge it the duty of every man that looketh for life everlasting, to give his confession to Christ Jesus, whose glory is by these blasphemers, to the utmost of their power, suppressed.

Some do think that because the reason of man cannot attain to the understanding how God shall be just, making in his counsel this diversity of mankind, that therefore, it were better to keep silence in all such mysteries, than to trouble the brains and minds of men with curious disputations. I willingly confess that all curiosity ought to be avoided, and that with great sobriety we ought to contemplate and behold the incomprehensible mystery of our redemption. But yet, I say, that the doctrine of God's eternal predestination is so necessary to the church of God, that, without the same, faith can neither be truly taught, nor surely established; man can never be brought to true humility and knowledge of himself; neither yet can he be ravished in admiration of God's eternal goodness, and so moved to praise him aright.

And, therefore, we fear not to affirm that, even as it is necessary that we be brought to unfeigned humility, and that we be brought to praise him for his free grace received, that true faith be established in our hearts; so also is the doctrine of God's eternal predestination necessary. For first, there is no way more proper to build and establish

educated at Louvain, a bigoted supporter of the papacy, and a violent opponent of the Reformation. Sadoletus, a learned Italian, was of a milder character, but a strenuous advocate for the Romish faith, and decidedly opposed to the views of Augustine and the German reformers respecting free-will and grace. Siculus was the leader of a sedition in Transylvania.

faith, than when we hear and undoubtedly do believe that our election, which the Spirit of God doth seal in our hearts, consists not in ourselves, but in the eternal and immutable good pleasure of God. And that in such firmness that it cannot be overthrown, neither by the raging storms of the world, nor by the assaults of satan, neither yet by the wavering and weakness of our own flesh. Then only is our salvation in assurance, when we find the cause of the same in the bosom and counsel of God. For so do we by faith apprehend life and peace manifested in Christ Jesus, that by the direction and guiding of the same faith we look further, namely, out of what fountain life doth proceed. (Rom. v. 1. John xiv. 6.) In Christ Jesus do we find liberty and life; he is made unto us of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; (1 Cor. i. 30.) and in the promise of the gospel is founded the stability of our salvation.

But yet we have a joy which far surmounteth this, (Rom. i. 26.) For albeit we should hear that the mercy and grace of God were offered unto all men, and albeit also that we should feel that our hearts were somewhat moved to believe; yet unless the very cause of our faith be known, our joy and comfort cannot be full. For if we shall think that we believe and have embraced Christ Jesus preached, because our understandings are better than the understandings of others, and because we have a better inclination, and are by nature more tractable than the common sort of men, satan, I say, can easily overthrow all comfort builded upon so weak a ground.

For as the heart of man is vain and inscrutable, so it may be, that those who this day are tractable and obedient, having also some zeal towards godliness, yea, and also both sense and feeling of God's mercy; such, I say, may shortly hereafter become stubborn in some cases, disobedient in matters of great importance, tempted with lusts, and finally they may be left so barren, that they shall rather tremble at the sight of God's judgments, than rejoice in the free adoption of his children.

Therefore, I say, that except our comfort be grounded upon that foundation which never can be moved, it is not perfect. And that ground is this; that when we understand we now believe in Christ Jesus, because we were rodained before the beginning of all times to believe in him; as in him we were elected to the enjoyment of eternal

life ; (Rom. viii. 29. Eph. i. 4,) then is our faith assuredly grounded, and that because the gifts and vocations of God are without repentance, and he is faithful that hath called us. (2 Thess. ii. 13. 2 Peter i. 2—20. Rom. xi. 29.) His infinite goodness which moved him to love us in another than ourselves, that is, in Christ Jesus, according to his free benevolence, which he had purposed in him, is to us a tower of refuge which satan is never able to overthrow, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.

Howsoever we are changeable, yet is God in his counsel stable and immutable; yea, how weak, how feeble, how dull soever we are, yet is there nothing in us, (even when we are in our own judgment most destitute of the Spirit of God,) which he did not see to be in us before we were formed in the womb, yea, and before the beginning of all times, because all is present with him. Which imperfections, infirmities, and dulness, as they did not stop his mercy to elect us in Christ Jesus, so can they not compel him now to refuse us. And from this fountain doth flow this our joy, that with the apostle we are bold to cry, Who is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus? (Rom. viii.) For seeing that the Father, who hath given us for a peculiar inheritance to his only Son, is so mighty, that out of his hand none is able to take us away ; what danger can be so great, what sin so grievous, or what desperation so deep, that is able to devour us! For seeing it is God himself who will absolve us from all iniquity; and seeing that Christ Jesus his Son will avow us to appertain to his body, what is he that dare rise against us to condemn us!

The comfort hereof none do feel except the chosen children of God, and that in the day when man's justice faileth, and the battle of their conscience is most grievous and fearful. Therefore as faith springeth from election, so is it established by the true knowledge of that doctrine only, which this day is most furiously oppugned by those who do not understand the same.

And from that same doctrine floweth the very matter of true humility. For while we behold the condition of those whom nature hath made equal, to be so far diverse the one from the other, it is impossible but that the children of God in their own hearts, unfeignedly should be humbled. For whithersoever they shall direct their eyes, they shall

behold fearful examples of blindness, and of such iniquity as all men justly ought to abhor; but when they consider themselves to have received light in the midst of such darkness, and themselves to be sanctified in the midst of so wicked a generation, from what fountain can they say that this proceedeth? Who hath illuminated their eyes, while others abide in blindness? Who doth bridle their affections, while others do follow the same to perdition? If they say nature hath done it, their own conscience shall convict them; for nature hath made us all equal—by nature are we the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph. ii.) If they say education, reason, or their own study, common experience shall declare their vanity. For how many have been nourished in virtue, and yet become most filthy in life! And by the contrary, how many have long remained without all virtuous education, and yet in the end have attained to God's favour! And therefore we say that such as attribute anything to themselves in the grace of their election, have not learned to give to God the honour which to him appertaineth, because they do not freely confess what makes them to differ from others.

It is universally received for a sentence most true, that as humility is the mother of all virtue so it is also the root of all godliness. But how is it possible that a man should be humbled, who cannot abide to hear of his former misery, in the which he was born? neither yet the means by the which he was delivered from the same? If a beggar being promoted to great honours by the liberality of a king, should be reminded of his former condition; and for declaration of his gratitude he should be commanded to reverence the ambassador or herald who thus should say unto him,—remember, and call to mind, how wretched, poor, and miserable, sometimes thou wast, and praise the goodness of the king, by whose mercy and gentleness thou livest now in this honourable estate. If this beggar (I say) should stomach* that his poverty should be so often objected unto him, who would say that he was humble, or thankful to the king? No more can it be said, that such as cannot abide the mention of God's eternal election, (by the which only the elect are extolled† to dignity in Christ Jesus,) are either humble in God's presence, or thankful for that infinite benefit which exceeds all measure. Namely, that we are elected in Christ

* Resent, be angry. † Raised up.

Jesus to life everlasting; and that God according to the good pleasure of his eternal counsel, hath made separation betwixt those who fell into equal perdition, as touching the offence and sin committed.

Such as desire this article to be buried in silence, and would that men should teach and believe that the grace of God's election is common unto all—but that one receives it and another receives it not, proceeds either from the obedience or disobedience of man—such deceive themselves, and are unthankful and injurious unto God. For so long as they see not that true faith and salvation spring from election, and are the gift of God, and come not of ourselves—so long are they deceived and remain in error. (Eph. ii. 8.) And what can be more injurious unto God's free grace than to affirm that he gives no more to one than to another; seeing that the whole scriptures do plainly teach that we have nothing which we have not received of free grace and mere mercy, and not of our works, nor of any thing in us, lest any man should boast. (Eph. ii. 8.)

And, therefore, let wicked men rage as they list, we will not be ashamed to confess always, that grace only makes difference betwixt us and the rest of the world. And further, we fear not to affirm, that such as feel not that comfort inwardly in their conscience, can never be thankful to God, neither yet willing to be subject to his eternal counsel; which is the only cause that these wicked men most irreverently do storm and rage against that doctrine which they do not understand. But let us, dear brethren, be assured, that none other doctrine doth establish faith, or make man humble and thankful unto God. And, finally, that none other doctrine makes man careful to obey God according to his commandment, but that doctrine only which so spoileth man of all power and virtue, that no portion of his salvation consists within himself; to the end that the whole praise of our redemption may be referred to Christ Jesus alone; whom the Father, of very love, hath given to death for the deliverance of his body, which is the Church, to the which He was appointed Head before the beginning of all times. (1 Cor. i. 30. 1 John iv. 10. Eph. i. 22.) To Him, therefore, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all praise and glory for ever and ever.

SO BE IT.

EXTRACTS

FROM A TREATISE ON PREDESTINATION, WRITTEN IN ANSWER TO THE CAVILLATIONS OF AN ADVERSARY,

BY JOHN KNOX.

Page 17, 18.

We do not willingly debate nor strive for words, nevertheless in no case we admit or receive the term which the Stoics used in Latin, and called FATE. As well because it is of the number of those words, the profane and unprofitable novelty whereof Paul willeth us to avoid, as also because by hatred of it our enemies endeavour to charge the verity of God. And as touching the opinion, we are falsely and maliciously burdened therewith; for we imagine not a necessity which is contained within nature by a perpetual conjunction of natural causes, as the Stoics did; but we affirm and maintain that God is Lord, Moderator and Governor of all things; whom we affirm to have determined from the beginning, according to his wisdom what he would do; and now we say that he executes according to his power whatsoever he hath determined. Whereof we conclude, that not only the heaven and earth and insensible creatures, but also the counsels and the wills of men are governed by his providence, so that they tend and are led to the scope and end which he hath purposed.

It is well and godly written by Basil, that fortune and adventure* are the words of heathens, the signification of which ought in no wise to enter into the hearts of the faithful. For if all prosperity be the benediction of God, and adversity be his malediction, there remains no place for fortune in such things as come to men.

Page 20—22.

When we attribute PRESCIENCE unto God, we understand that all things have ever been, and perpetually abide present before his eyes, so that to his eternal knowledge

* Chance.

nothing is by-past, nothing to come, but all things are present, and so are they present, not as conceived imaginations, or forms and figures, whereof other innumerable things proceed (as Plato teaches that of the form and example of one man, many thousands of men are fashioned). But we say that all things are so present before God, that he contemplates and beholds them in their verity and perfection. And therefore it is, that the prophets oftentimes speak of things being yet to come, with such certainty as though they were already done. And this prescience of God we affirm to be extended to the universal compass and circuit of the world, yea, and to every particular creature of the same.

God's PROVIDENCE we call that sovereign empire and supreme dominion, which God always keeps in the government of all things contained in heaven and in earth. And these two (that is prescience and providence) we so attribute to God, that with the apostle we fear not to affirm, that in him we have our being, moving, and life. We fear not to affirm that the way of man is not in his own power, but that his footsteps are directed by the Eternal. (John x.) That the sortes* and lots, which appear most subject to fortune, go forth by his providence. (Prov. xvi.) And that even a sparrow falleth not upon the ground without our heavenly Father. (Matt. x.) And thus we give to God, not prescience only by an idle sight, and providence by a general moving† of his creatures, (as not only some philosophers do, but also more in our days than is to be wished,) but we attribute unto him such a knowledge and providence as is extended to every one of his creatures. In which he so worketh, that they willingly tend and incline to the end to which they are appointed by him. What comfort the sons of God receive in earnest meditations hereof, this time will not suffice to treat. But at one word to finish; alas! to what misery were we exposed, if we should be persuaded that satan and the wicked might or could do any thing, otherwise than God hath appointed. Let the godly consider this.

PREDESTINATION, whereof now this question is, we call the eternal and immutable decree of God, by which he hath once determined with himself, what he will have to

* Events. † Directing.

be done with every man. For he hath not created all to be of one condition. Or, if we will have the definition of predestination more fully, we say, that it is the most wise and most just purpose of God, by which before all time he constantly hath decreed to call those whom he hath loved in Christ, to the knowledge of himself and of his son Christ Jesus, that they may be assured of their adoption by the justification of faith; which, working in them by charity, maketh their works to shine before men to the glory of their Father, so that they, made conformable to the image of the Son of God, may finally receive that glory which is prepared for the vessels of mercy.

These latter parts, namely of vocation, justification by faith, and the effect of the same, I have added for such as think that we imagine it sufficient, that we be predestinate, how wickedly soever we live. *We constantly affirm the plain contrary*, namely, that none living wickedly can have the assurance that he is predestinated to life everlasting. Yea, although man and angel should bear record with him, yet will his own conscience condemn him, until such time as he unfeignedly turn from his wicked conversation.

Page 35—39.

Our master Christ Jesus plainly affirms that all which the Father gave him should come unto him, pronouncing that whosoever cometh he will not cast him forth, but will raise him up and give him life. "For this," saith he, "is the will of the Father that hath sent me, that I shall lose none of all those whom the Father hath given to me, but that I might raise them up in the last day; for this is the will of him that hath sent me, that all that see the Son and believe in him may have life everlasting."

Of those words of our Master, it is evident; First, that the Father hath given some to the Son Christ Jesus, yea, and also that there are some that are not given. And secondly, that it behoveth the same to come unto him, for so he affirms, saying, "All that my Father gave unto me shall come unto me." He leaves it not in doubt, but plainly affirms, they shall come. Thirdly, the end and fruit of the coming is expressed—namely, that they obtain life everlasting. Which is so sure to them that of the

Father are given, and of the Son are received, that Christ Jesus himself pronounces that out of his hands none is able to pluck them away. Plain it is, that the counsel of God is stable, and his love immutable towards his elect, because, all other conditions set apart, Christ affirms, that the life everlasting pertains to them that are given by God, and received by him in protection and safeguard. But more plainly does he speak in that his solemn prayer; for after that by divers means he had comforted the sorrowful hearts of his disciples, he gives comfort to the whole Church—affirming, that he did not only pray for those who were there present with him, but also for all those that should afterwards believe in him, through their preaching. These words he added for our special comfort, "I have given unto them the glory which thou hast given to me, that they may be one as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know, that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." O that our hearts could embrace these words without contradiction; for then with humility we should prostrate ourselves before our God, and with unfeigned tears give thanks for his mercy!

Three things are to be observed in these words; First, that the same glory which God the Father hath given to his Son, the same hath he given to such as believe in him. Not that either Christ Jesus had then the full glory, as he was man, for as yet he had not overcome death; neither that his elect at any time in this life can attain to the fruition of the same, but that the one was as assured in God's immutable counsel as the other. For as the Head should overcome the bitter death, and so triumph over satan the author thereof, so also should his members do in the time appointed, as he further expresses, saying, "Father, I will, that where I am, there also be those which thou hast given unto me, that they may see my glory." The second is, that so strict and near is the conjunction and union betwixt Christ Jesus and his members, that they must be one, and never can be separated. For so did Christ pray, saying, "That they all may be one as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Let the conjunction be diligently marked, for it serves much to our comfort. As the Godhead

is inseparably joined with the humanity* in Christ Jesus our Lord, so the one, that is the Godhead, neither could nor can leave the humanity at any time, how bitter soever the storms appeared; so cannot Christ Jesus leave his dear spouse the Church, neither yet any true member of the same. For he includes under the general word "all," any thing which befel, how horrible soever it be, and came to pass in their life. And although this appear strange, and also a doctrine which may seem to give liberty to sin, yet the children of God may not be defrauded of their food because dogs will abuse the same. The third thing to be noted, is, that the love of God towards his elect, given to Christ, is immutable. For Christ places it in equal balance with the love by which his Father loved him. Not that I would any man should so understand me, as though I placed any man in equal dignity and glory with Christ Jesus touching his office. No, that must be reserved wholly and only to himself, that he is the only Beloved, in whom all the rest are beloved—that he is the Head, which only giveth life to the body—and that he is the sovereign Prince, before whom every knee shall bow. But I mean, that as the love of God the Father was ever constant towards his dear Son, so is it also towards the members of his body, yea, even when they are ignorant and enemies to him, as the apostle witnesseth, saying, "God specially commendeth his love towards us, that when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more being justified now by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (Rom. v.)

To some these words may appear contrary to our purpose, for they make mention of a reconciliation, which is not made excepting where there is enmity and dissension. But if they are rightly considered, they shall most evidently prove that which we affirm, which is, that God loves the members of Christ's body even when they are ignorant—when they by themselves are unworthy and enemies. For this is his first proposition, that we being justified by faith, have peace with God by our Lord Jesus Christ. Where he makes mention of peace, he puts us in

* Human nature.

mind of the dissension and war which were between God's justice* and our sins. This enmity, saith he, is taken away, and we have obtained peace. And lest this comfort should suddenly vanish, or that men should not deeply weigh it, he brings us to the eternal love of God, affirming that God loved us when we were weak. Where we must observe, that the apostle speaks not universally of all men, but of such as were and should be justified by faith, and had the love of God poured into their hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given unto them. To such he saith—If God loved us when we were weak, and his enemies, much more must he love us when we are reconciled, and begin, in faith, to call him "Father." The apostle affirms that our reconciliation proceeded from God's love, which St. John more plainly witnesseth in these words:—"In this appeareth the love of God towards us, that God hath sent forth his only Son into the world, that we should live by him. In this, I say, is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and hath sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv.) So that both these apostles in plain words speak that which I have before affirmed, namely, that God loved the members of Christ Jesus even when they were enemies, both touching their knowledge and apprehension, as also touching the corruption of their nature, which was not regenerate. And so I conclude as before, that the love of God toward his elect is stable and immutable, as it begins not in time, neither depends upon our worthiness or dignity.

Page 40, 41.

True it is that to the natural man nothing appeareth more absurd, nor more repugnant to good reason, as men term it, than that all shall depend upon God's will and appointment; for so think they that God cannot avoid the suspicion of injustice; yea, say they, he cannot be cleared nor made free from malice and cruelty. But let such, entering within themselves, even but in a part consider what is their own condition, what is their ignorance, and how far they are inferior to the angels in justice* and knowledge—to his holy angels, I say, that are most obedient, and continually stand before his face, and yet

* Righteousness.

nevertheless do cover their faces, and of very reverence neither dare nor will rashly behold the brightness of his glory. If further we shall consider that as in God, his wisdom, his power, his goodness and mercy are infinite, so are his judgments and justice (in themselves most righteous) incomprehensible to the dulness of our understanding. For as his wisdom and power far surmount all that we can imagine, so are his judgments and justice a great deep, as David affirms, and in the book of Job is plainly described, able to swallow up and utterly to confound all our senses. Alas, shall I, whose corporeal eye is so feeble and weak that it cannot directly behold the sun, which is a visible creature, but that it shall be blinded and dazzled, shall I, I say, direct the eye of my mind, corrupted by sin, to measure and comprehend the brightness of his justice, who dwelleth in the light inaccessible ?

If man could impose or prescribe to God a law and measure of wisdom, power, mercy, and goodness, so that none of them should be in his eternal Godhead, unless man could understand and approve, then some appearance might they have to bring his justice, which is no less infinite and incomprehensible than the others, under the censure and examination of their judgment and reason. But what bold and foolish presumption is this ; that man, who knoweth not fully what lieth within his own heart, should without all reverence, enter to judge the secret mysteries, the full knowledge whereof only abides in the eternal Godhead ; so that impudently he should pronounce, This cannot be just, because we do neither see nor understand the cause of the justice ! God grant us greater humility, more reverence and fear (which rightly is called the beginning of wisdom,) than that so rashly aud proudly we shall presume to condemn that which we understand not ; lest that doing the contrary, the malediction pronounced by Isaiah fall upon us, where he saith, " Wo be to him that reasoneth with his Maker, the vessel of clay with the potter ! Doth the clay say to the potter, What makest thou ? and, thy work hath no hands ! Wo be to him that saith to his father, What begettest thou ?" (Isa. xlv.)

Page 57.

Christ Jesus, in that his most solemn and most comfortable prayer, (John xvii.) after other things, saith, "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given to me out of the world. They were thine, and thou hast given them unto me, and they have kept thy word." And shortly after, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given unto me, because they are thine." If in the whole scriptures, there were no more places to prove that in the eternal counsel of God there is a difference of one sort of men from another, this one alone were sufficient. For first Christ maketh mention of men given unto him by the Father, who were, as he before affirmed, chosen out of the world. And why were they given unto Christ? He answereth, Because they were the Father's. And how they appertained to God more than others is before said. He further declares what he had done unto them; what they also had done; and what he did, and would do to the end, for them. He had opened unto them the name, that is, the mercy, goodness, constant truth, and perfect justice, of his heavenly Father; which doctrines they had received and kept, as they that were the ground appointed to bring forth fruit in abundance. He prayed for them that they should be sanctified and confirmed in the verity. The virtue of which prayer is perpetual, and at all times obtaineth mercy in the presence of his Father's throne for his elect. And lest that any doubt should remain, as though these graces were common to all the world; in plain and express words he affirms, that he prayed not for the world, but for those, saith he, whom thou hast given unto me.

Page 60—63.

Isaiah plainly affirms, that all our justice* is as a cloth most polluted and spotted. If our justice be polluted, as the prophet affirms it to be, and God did predestinate us for our justice, what follows, but that God did predestinate us for that which was filthy and imperfect? But God forbid that such cogitations should take place in our hearts!

* Righteousness.

God did choose us in his eternal purpose, for his own glory to be manifested in us; and that he did in Christ Jesus, in whom only is our full perfection, as before we have said.

But let us hear some testimonies of the new testament. St. Paul, to his disciple Timothy, saith, "Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, neither be thou ashamed of me, who am his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, who hath made us safe, and hath called us with a holy vocation, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and free grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before all times, but now is made apparent by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. i.) Here it is plain, that neither are we called, neither yet saved, by works, much less can we be predestinate for them, or in respect of them. True it is, that God hath prepared good works, that we should walk in them; but alike true it is, that first must the tree be good, before it bring forth good fruit, and good the tree can never be, except the hand of the gardener have planted it. To use herein the plain words of St. Paul, he witnesseth that we are elected in Christ, to the end that we should be holy and without blemish. Now seeing that good works spring forth of election, how can any man be so foolish as to affirm that they are the cause of the same? Can the stream of water, flowing from the fountain, be the cause of the original spring? I think no man will so hold or affirm. Even so it is in this matter; for faith and a godly life that ensue* our vocation, are the fruits proceeding from our election, but are not the causes of the same. And therefore the apostle, to beat down all pride, asks, "What hast thou, O man, that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why gloriest thou, as though thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv.)

The apostle in that place speaks not of one or two graces; but whatsoever is necessary to salvation, that he affirms to be received, and that of free grace; as he yet more plainly witnesseth, saying, "Of grace are ye saved, by faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, and not of works, lest any should glory." (Eph. ii.) Now if man hath nothing but what he receives of grace, of free gift, of favour and mercy, what odious pride and horrible unthankfulness is this, that man shall imagine that for his

* Follow after.

faith or for his works, God did elect and predestinate him to that dignity? Even as if two or three beggars, chosen from the number of many, were, of the liberal mercy of a prince, promoted to honour, and should afterwards brag and boast that their good service was the cause that the prince did choose them. Should not every wise man mock their vanity? Yea, might not the prince justly deprive them for their arrogant unthankfulness? Might not the prince have left them in their wretched estate? And what then would have become of their service?

Is it not even so with man, lost in Adam, of which mass or lump God, of his own free grace, did choose and predestinate vessels of his mercy, prepared unto glory, that they should be holy, as before is said. Shall these then that find mercy to work good works, boast as though works were the cause thereof? God forbid! For if the posterity of Abraham did not obtain the inheritance of the land of Canaan for any righteousness that was in them; yea, if God did not choose them either to temporal or eternal felicity, but of love and free grace only, as Moses witnesseth, how shall we think that the eternal inheritance, or God's election to the joy and life everlasting, depends upon any quality within us? Wonder it is, that the apostle St. Paul, treating of this matter of God's free election, was ignorant of this cause, if it be sufficient. For by that means, in few words, he might have put to silence many dogs, which then, (as men do now) barked against this doctrine. For if he had said, God hath chosen afore all times, to the participation of life, a certain number, because he foresaw that they would be faithful, obedient to his commandments, and holy in conversation; and upon the other part, he hath rejected and reprobated others, because he foresaw that they would be unfaithful, disobedient, and unclean of life; this, I say, (if those causes had been sufficient,) had been a sensible manner of doctrine.

But the apostle alleges no such reason, but first of all beats down the pride of man, (as before we have touched,) and thereafter breaks forth in this exclamation, "Oh, the height of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable are his ways!" This exclamation, I say, had been vain, if either works or faith foreseen had been the cause of God's election.

Augustine mocks the sharp sight of men, that in his days, began to see more deeply than did the Holy Ghost, speaking in the apostle. And we fear not to affirm, that the men who this day do attribute election or predestination to any virtue or quality within men, do hold and defend, to their great danger, that which none, endued with the Spirit of God, has left to us written within the holy scriptures, neither yet that which any of the chosen shall confess in their greatest glory. Let the whole scriptures be read and diligently marked, and no sentence, rightly understood, shall be found, that affirms God to have chosen us in respect of our works, or because he foresaw that we should be faithful, holy and just. But to the contrary, many places shall we find (yea, even so many as treat of the matter) that plainly affirm we are freely chosen, according to the purpose of his good will, and that in Christ Jesus.

And what shall be the confession of the whole body assembled, when they shall receive the promised glory, is expressed in the words of the twenty-four elders, (Rev. iv. v.) who, casting their crowns before Him that sitteth upon the throne, say, "Worthy art thou, O Lord and our God, to take honour and glory and power. For thou hast created all things, and by thy will they are and were created." And afterwards they fall before the Lamb, and sing a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast killed, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us to our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth." No mention is here made of any worthiness of man; the creation is given to God; and that all things are in that perfect state, which then the chosen shall possess, is attributed to his will. The death of the Lamb is assigned to be the cause of the redemption, yea, of that great dignity to which they are promoted. I am fully persuaded, that if any cause of God's election, and of the fruit proceeding of the same, were or could be in man, that the Holy Ghost, who is author of all justice, would not have defrauded man of any thing which of right did appertain unto him. But seeing that in no place the Holy Ghost doth attribute any part of man's salvation to his own merits or worthiness, I fear not to affirm, that this pestilent opinion is the instigation of satan, labouring by all means to obscure the glory of Christ Jesus, and to retain

man in bondage, whom he infected with that first venom which he made him to drink, saying, "Ye shall be as gods." (Gen. iii.)

Page 70.

Falsely ye burden us, that we affirm that God hath ordained the most part of the world to perdition; for we presume not to define what number God shall save, and how many he shall justly condemn, but with reverence do we refer judgment to Him who is the universal Creator; whose goodness and wisdom are such that he can do nothing but wisely; and whose justice is so perfect, that his works are exempted from the judgment of all creatures whatsoever. But your affirmation, that if God condemn more than he shall save, that then his wrath is greater than his mercy, is so irreverent, so bold, and blasphemous, that scarcely could I have thought that the devil himself could have imagined a more manifest blasphemy.

Who hath given the balance into thy hands, (I speak to this most blasphemous writer) to ponder and weigh God's mercy and wrath, after thy corrupt judgment? If thou claimest the help of these former scriptures, they prove no more that which thou pretendest, than if thou shouldest affirm, that God shall save the devil because his mercy is above all his creatures. We do not deny but that the most wicked men are participant of God's mercy in temporal felicity, yea, and that far above his chosen children; that he maketh his sun to shine upon the good and bad; that with long suffering he calleth them to repentance, and delayeth their most just condemnation. But what wilt thou hereof conclude, that God hath ordained more to salvation than to perdition? Or else is his wrath greater than his mercy? Blasphemous mouth! Who hath taught thee to appoint a law to God? The day shall come, if speedily thou repent not, that thou shalt feel what punishment is due to such as go about to bring the eternal God and his incomprehensible judgments under the thraldom of their corrupt reason.

Page 93.

That we are created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, is not to be referred (as ye think) to the common creation of all men in Adam, but to the new and spiritual regeneration which God's children have in Christ Jesus; for the which David did pray, saying, A clean heart create in me, O God; which is no less called the creation of God, than was the first creation of man. For as man, in his creation, neither wrought, neither yet could deserve to be created so honourable as he was; but did suffer the power of God to work, even as it pleased his wisdom to perform the work; so in our new creation unto good works, the only grace and power of God worketh not only the beginning, but also bringeth to perfection; so that whatsoever is good, holy, or just in us, is God's creation, and not our work. God open your eyes, that ye may see that neither in Adam, neither yet in ourselves, were we created to good works, but in Christ Jesus alone. And then I think ye will not so much boast of your free will.

Page 97, 98.

Simply we do teach, that God in his eternal counsel, for the manifestation of his own glory, hath, of one mass, chosen vessels of honour whom before all times he hath given unto Christ Jesus, that they in him should receive life. And of the same mass he hath left others in that corruption in the which they were to fall, and so were they prepared to destruction. The cause why the one were elected, we confess and acknowledge not to be in man, but to be the free grace and the free mercy, showed and freely given to us in Christ Jesus, who only is appointed head to give life to the body. Why the others were rejected, we affirm the cause to be most just, but yet secret and hid from us, reserved in his eternal wisdom, to be revealed at the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus.

This one thing do we (compelled by your blasphemous accusations) repeat oftener than we would, to the end that indifferent* men may see what doctrine it is which you so maliciously impugn.

* Impartial.

Howsoever you join God's absolute ordinance and sin together, we make so far division betwixt the purpose and eternal counsel of God, (for absolute ordinance we use not in that matter) and the sin of man, that we plainly affirm, that man, when he sinned, did neither look to God's will, God's counsel, nor eternal purpose; but did altogether consent to the will of the devil, which did manifestly gainsay God's revealed will. And therefore do we affirm, that neither was the purpose nor counsel of God any cause of sin; but we say, with the apostle, that by one man did sin enter into the world. The cause whereof was the malice of the devil, and that free consent of man to rebellion, whose will was neither enforced, neither yet by any violence of God's purpose, compelled to consent, but he, of free will and ready mind, left God and joined with the devil. Convict us now, (if ye can,) that we make God's absolute ordinance, (which manner of speaking, I say, we abhor,) to be the principal cause of sin.

Page 98.

We say not that God's ordinance is the cause of reprobation, but we affirm that the just causes of reprobation are hid in the eternal counsel of God, and known to his godly wisdom alone. But the causes of sin, of death, and damnation are evident, and manifestly declared to us in the scriptures. Namely, man's free will consenting to the deceivable persuasion of the devil, wilful sin, and voluntary rebellion, by which death entered into this world, the contempt of graces and God's mercies offered, with the heaping up of sin upon sin, till damnation justly came. These causes, I say, of sin, death, and damnation, are plainly noted to us in God's holy scriptures. But why it pleased God to show mercy to some, and deny the same to others—because the judgments of God are a devouring depth, we enter not into reasoning with him, but with all humility render thanks to his Majesty for the grace and mercy, which we doubt not but of his free grace we have received, in Christ Jesus our only Head.

Page 104.

We affirm that God's election in Christ Jesus is so certain, and his eternal purpose to save his church is so constant, that against the faith of God's elect shall not the ports and gates of hell prevail in the end: that neither can life nor death, things present nor to come, separate and dissever us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. That this foundation is stable, the Lord knoweth his own, and therefore shall every one that calleth on the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity; for we are not called to uncleanness, but unto sanctification and holiness, by the power of that Spirit who raised from death, Jesus the great Pastor of our souls. Which Holy Spirit, freely by faith (which also is the gift of God) doth so rule and reign in our hearts, that albeit the flesh lusteth against the spirit, yet are we assured of victory, by the only power of him who hath overcome the world.

Page 105, 106.

Your words augment in me a suspicion, that ye have a further fetch in this matter than your rude scholars understand at the first; namely, that every one of you shall become Christ's so perfect and clean, that in you, even in this life shall remain no enemy to be overcome, except death only; and that this is the opinion of your greatest angels,* I am able to prove by sufficient testimony, I mean, by their own hand writings. But how far St. Paul was from that perfection, yea, even when he was ready to be offered in sacrifice for the testimony of Christ Jesus, he was not ashamed to confess, thus writing to the Philippians, after he had affirmed that all justice† which before he looked for in the law, was become to him as loss and dung, to the end that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own justice which was of the law, but that which was by the faith of Christ Jesus—he adds, "Not as though I had already attained to the mark, (understanding that justice which he hoped for,) either that I am already perfect; but I follow, if I may comprehend that, for whose sake I am comprehended of Christ Jesus.

* Preachers. † Righteousness.

Brethren, I think not myself to have attained to the mark, but one thing I do, forgetting that which is behind, I endeavour myself to reach that which is before." Here the apostle, who had fought somewhat longer than some who now brag of an easy battle, confessed that he was not yet perfect, neither yet that he had attained to that estate, that is, to the resurrection of the dead, to which he daily did aspire.

Page 126, 127.

God's prescience and foreknowledge are not to be separated from his will and decree. For none otherwise doth God foresee things to come to pass, but according as he himself hath in his eternal counsel decreed the same. For as it appertains to his wisdom to foreknow and foresee all things that are to come, so does it appertain to his power to moderate and rule all things, according to his own will. Neither yet, therefore, does it follow that his foreknowledge, prescience, will, or power, take away the free will of his creatures, but in all wisdom and justice (however the contrary appear to our corrupted judgments,) he uses them as best it pleases his wisdom to bring to pass in time, that which before all time he had decreed. To which purpose and end, they (I mean the creatures and their wills,) whatsoever they purpose to the contrary, or how ignorantly so ever they work it, nevertheless do voluntarily, and as it were of a natural motion, incline and bow to that end to which they are created.

To make the matter more plain, let us take the creation and fall of Adam, with the creatures that served in the same, for example. For what chief end did God create all things, (from Solomon and Paul we have before declared, Rom. ix. Prov. xvi.) namely, for his own glory to be showed; the glory, I say, of the riches of his mercy towards the vessels of mercy, and the glory of his justice and most just judgments towards the vessels of wrath. And that this eternal counsel of God should take effect, as he had purposed, man was created righteous, wise, just, and good, having free will; neither subject to the thraldom of sin nor of satan at the first creation. But suddenly came satan, enemy to God and to man his good creature, and

first poured in venom into the heart of the woman, which afterward, she poured into the heart of Adam; to which both the one and the other, without any violence used on God's part, willingly consented; and so conspiring with the serpent, accused God of a lie, and fully consented to arrogate or challenge to themselves the power of the Godhead, of mind and purpose, so far as in them lay, to thrust down and depose Him from his eternal throne. Here we see how the creatures and their wills, without compulsion, serve God's purpose and counsel. For satan was neither sent nor commanded of God to tempt man, but of malice and hatred did most willingly and greedily run to the same; the will of man being free before, was not by God violently compelled to obey satan; but man of free will did consent to satan, and conspire against God.

Page 127—130.

Let us take another example, that the matter may be more evident. The death of Christ Jesus for man's redemption was decreed in the eternal counsel of God before the foundations of the world were laid, as we were elected in him, and as he was the Lamb killed from the beginning; which death also was decreed in the same counsel of God, to be in a certain time appointed; and that so certainly, that neither could the malice of any creature prevent the hour appointed of God thereto, neither yet could any policy or chance impede or transfer the same to any other time. For how oft aforetime Christ was assaulted, the evangelists do witness, but always his answer was, "Mine hour is not yet come." And what impediments occurred immediately before his death, are also evident. The feast of Easter was at that time, the fame of Christ was great, the favour of the people with public voices was declared, and the counsels of the high priests and seniors had decreed that, to avoid sedition, his death should be delayed till after that feast. But all these were shortly overthrown, and Christ suffered in the very time appointed, as he before had forespoken.

But now to the instruments which serve in this matter, and whether they were compelled by God or not. Judas,

we know, was not one of the least; and what moved him the Holy Ghost doth witness, namely, his avarice. The scribes, pharisees, priests and seniors, and people, being led, some of malice and envy, some to gratify their rulers, and all together of set purpose to crucify Christ, do consent with Judas. Pilate, although he long refused, and by divers means studied to deliver Christ, yet in the end, for fear of displeasure, as well of the priests and people, as of the emperor, he willingly, without any compulsion of God's part, pronounced an unjust sentence of death against Christ Jesus, which his soldiers also most willingly did execute. Thus, I say, we see that the creatures and their wills, without any compulsion, do serve God's counsel and purpose. Here I know that ye think that either I write against myself, or else that I conclude a great absurdity; for if I say that God did nothing but foresee these things, and so permitted them to follow their own train; then he worketh no more, but is as a simple beholder of a tragedy; then should I agree with you. And if I say (as in very deed I do understand and affirm,) that the eternal counsel and purpose of God so ruled in all these things, that rather they served to God's purpose and most just will, than fulfilled their most wicked wills; then will you cry, "Blasphemy," and say that I deliver the devil, Adam, and all the wicked, from sin, of which I make God to be author.

To the first, I have answered before, that as I separate not God's foreknowledge from his counsel, so I affirm that he worketh all in all things, according to the purpose of the same his good will; and yet that he useth no violence, neither in compelling his creatures, neither constraining their wills by any external force, neither yet taking their wills from them; but in all wisdom and justice using them as he knoweth to be most expedient for the manifestation of his glory, without any violence, I say, done to their wills. For violence is done to the will of a creature, when it willeth one thing, and yet by force, tyranny, or by a greater power, it is compelled to do the things which it would not, as if a modest and honest matron or chaste virgin, should be assaulted by a wicked and filthy man with violence and force, though the will of the woman did plainly resist. This is violence done to the will, and she of necessity was compelled to suffer that ignominy and shame, which nevertheless she most abhorred.

Do we say that God did or doth any such violence to his creatures? Did he compel satan to tempt the woman, when his will was contrary thereto? Did the will of Adam resist the temptation of the woman, and did he so hate and abhor to eat of that fruit, that it behoved God to compel his will, repugning thereto, to eat of it, and so to break his commandments? Or rather, did he not willingly hear and obey the voice of his wife? Consider, I beseech you, how plainly we put a difference betwixt violence, which you call mere necessity, and God's secret counsel and eternal purpose.

But yet ye cry, Wherein then did man offend? Who can resist the will of God? Why doth he complain, seeing that his counsel and purpose, by such means, are brought to pass? Do ye not understand that these were the furious cries of those, upon whom St. Paul imposes silence with this sentence, "O man, who art thou that darest reason against God?" &c.

But lest ye complain, as your common custom is, of our obscurity and dark speaking, I will even in one or two words declare, why the creatures offend, even when they serve most effectually to God's purpose. Namely, because they neither have the glory of God, in their actions, before their eyes, neither yet mind they to serve or obey God's purpose and will. Satan, in tempting man, studied nothing to promote God's glory; man in obeying the temptation looked not to the counsel of God; Judas, Ananias, Pilate, the soldiers, and the rest, had nothing less in mind, than man's redemption to be performed by their counsels and wicked works. And therefore, of God's justice, were they every one reputed sinners; yea, and some of them reprobated for ever. If these reasons do not satisfy you, yet shall they be a testimony what is our doctrine; and, as I trust, shall also be a reasonable contentation to the godly and simple reader. More would I have spoken in the same matter, and so have put an end unto it at once; but because that by reason of your most unjust accusations, I shall hereafter be compelled to have to do with you again, I wait opportunity.

Page 130, 131.

Wonder it is, that ye cannot see how God's will can remain in liberty, except he abide in suspense or doubt, and so daily and hourly change his purpose and counsel, as occasion is offered unto him by men and by their actions. If this be to make God bound, and to take from him liberty, to affirm that as he is infinite in wisdom, infinite in goodness, infinite in justice, and infinite in power, so doth he most constantly, most freely, most justly, and most wisely, bring that to pass, which in his eternal counsel he hath determined.—If this, I say, be to take from God freedom, wisdom, and liberty, as ye do rail, I must confess myself a transgressor. But if your cogitations and foolish conclusions of his eternal Godhead, be, as alas! too manifestly ye declare yourselves, so profane, so carnal, and so wicked, that you, abiding long in the same, cannot escape God's just vengeance,—repent, before, in his anger, he arrest, and declare that your justice, whereof so much ye brag, is manifest blasphemy against his dear Son, Christ Jesus. God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve his small flock from your pestilent and most dangerous heresies, and stop your blasphemous mouths, that thus dare jest upon God, as if he were one of your companions, saying, Then is he a goodly wise God; Then is God bound himself, &c.

Page 163—167.

The second thing which is laid to our charge is, that we cause many others to burst out and say, "Since no man is able to resist his will and pleasure, let him lay it on himself, and not upon us, if any sin be committed."

If the blasphemies of the ungodly should be laid to our charge, because we teach a doctrine most true, and most comfortable to the children of God, then cannot the apostle St. Paul be excused. For the same blasphemies were vomited first against him, and the doctrine which he taught. Some crying Let us do evil, that good may come of it; others, Let us abide in sin, that grace may abound; and so, furiously roaring as ye do, they despitefully cried, Wherefore doth he complain? who can resist his will? But

was the doctrine therefore damnable? Or, was the apostle criminal for teaching the same? I suppose ye will be more favourable in this cause, than so rashly to condemn him whom God hath absolved. If then our doctrine cannot be impugned by the plain scriptures of God, why should we sustain the blame of other men's blasphemies? Howbeit, in very deed, the blasphemies of none come so plainly to our ears as yours do. For the very papists, and the insolent of the world are ashamed so impudently to lie upon us; who, although they will not follow the purity of the doctrine taught by us, yet either are they put to silence by the power of the Holy Spirit, or else they invent some colourable lies, and abstain from such open blasphemies as you cast out against God and us.

"We lay to your charge, (say you) none other things than ye yourselves do confess, for ye affirm that God worketh all things according to his will and pleasure."

We answer, that maliciously and devilishly ye wrest our words contrary to our mind; for we always make a most plain difference betwixt the will of God, and the will of the wicked; and betwixt the purpose, counsel, and end of God, and the purpose and end of man; as in all his holy process before treated of, the indifferent reader may well consider.

If ye continue in your blindness, and furiously cry; "But ye affirm, that without his will and against it, nothing is done, therefore men think, that even when they sin, they obey God's will?" I answer by the words of the same writer whom before I have alleged, Touching the works which we commit, the will of God is to be considered, as he himself hath declared it; for he hath not given his law in vain, by which he hath discerned* good from evil. As for example, when he commandeth no man to be hurt, no man to be injured, but that equity and justice be indifferently kept to all; that no man steal, or defraud his brother; that none commit adultery, fornication, or filthiness, but that every man keep his own vessel in sanctification and honour. Here is the will of God evident and plain, what further pleases him in these cases ought no man to inquire; for we know that if we do these and other things that are commanded, and abstain from all things that are forbidden, then we obey the will of God. And if we do not that, we cannot be acceptable to him. If any man

* Distinguished.

shall steal or commit adultery, and shall say that he hath done nothing against the will of God, he lieth most impudently. For in so far as he hath transgressed the commandment of God, by which he was taught what was God's will, he hath done against his will. Let all men now judge if we give occasion to man to flatter himself in sin, and to think that when they commit iniquity against the express commandment of God, they then obey his holy will.

If any demand, whether anything can be done against God's will, that is, whether God may not, if he would, stay and impede the sin of man, I have answered him before by the mouth of Augustine, and now again by John Calvin, that nothing is or can be done, which he may not impede if so it please his wisdom; yet utterly we must eschew, that we inquire not of his providence, which is hid from us, when the question is of our duty. His word declares unto us what he approves, and what he condemns; with that we ought to stand content, and by the same ought we to rule our lives, leaving the secrets to God, as by Moses we are taught.

To make the matter more plain; suppose the case, that I be tempted with concupiscence, and lust another man's wife, against which I long strive, and in the end satan objects to me this cogitation, Follow thy purpose, for by that means thou mayest perchance be further humbled, and afterwards thou mayest taste more abundantly the mercy and the grace of God. Should I therefore loose the bridle to my wicked affections? should I decline from the plain precept, and enter into the secret providence of God? God forbid! for that, besides the violating or breaking of his commandment, were horrible temptation of his godly Majesty, and so in one act double impiety were committed. The sins of God's dearest children I know are grievous and many; and wondrous is the providence of God working in his saints, but never or seldom it is, that such perilous cogitations prevail against them; for the Spirit of God so ruleth in them, that commonly this sentence of Solomon is before their eyes, Such as irreverently search out God's majesty, shall be oppressed by the glory of the same.

And so must it needs come to pass, as John Calvin affirms, that the pride of such must be punished, and that with a horrible punishment; the pride of those, I say,

shall be punished who, not content with the revealed will of God, (to which they will not be obedient,) delight to mount and fly above the skies, there to seek the secret will of God. With what face can ye now lay to our charge, that we give occasion to men to flatter themselves in sin, or yet to think that in committing iniquity they obey God's will? Ye allege, perchance, that the common people read not our writings, and therefore they cannot understand our judgment in this case. I answer, the more impudent and blasphemous are you, who so defame us in the ears of the unlearned multitude, that ye make both us and our doctrine odious to them, before that ever it be known or examined.

But yet for further discharge of ourselves against your most unjust accusations, and for the better instruction of the simple, I will adduce another testimony from the writing of the same faithful servant of Christ Jesus, John Calvin, and so put an end to this your second calumny. In his commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles, the second chapter, writing upon these words of Peter, affirming that by the determinate counsel and prescience of God, was Jesus betrayed and crucified by the hands of wicked men; "Because," saith he, "Peter appeareth to mean that wicked men obeyed God; whereof of two absurdities, one must needs follow, namely, either that God is the author of evil, or that men, committing all kinds of iniquity, do not sin, because they seem to obey God. I answer that wicked men do not obey God, howsoever it be that they put in execution those things, which God hath with himself appointed. For obedience proceeds from a voluntary affection, which earnestly thirsts to please God; but we know that the wicked have a far other purpose; moreover, no man obeys God, but such as have known his will. Obedience then depends upon the knowledge of God's will. And so as the will of God is revealed in his law, so likewise it is evident, that whosoever transgresseth against his revealed will, hath his conscience to witness against him, that neither he doeth the will of God, neither yet obeyeth him." To the second, he saith, "I constantly deny that God is the author of evil; for in this word, 'evil,' there is the notation and propriety of a wicked affection; which never falleth* nor can fall in God. The evil work ought to be judged by the purpose and end to which every

* Can be applied.

man intendeth in his action. When men commit theft, or murder, they sin, because they are thieves and murderers. In the theft and murder there is wicked counsel, which never intends to please God, but to satiate their inordinate appetites. But God, who uses their malice, is to be placed in glory above them, for he looketh to another end. For the one he will punish, and the patience of the other he will exercise. And so he never declines nor bows from his own nature, that is, from a most perfect righteousness." So, that Christ was betrayed and crucified by the hands of the wicked, it was done by the ordinance of God. But the treason and the slaughter, which by themselves were most odious and wicked, ought not to be judged nor accounted the work of God. Let men, whose minds the devil hath not inflamed in hatred and malice against God, against his simple truth, and against the professors of the same, now judge whether we affirm God to be the author of sin, or if we give any just occasion that man should glory in wickedness, either yet that they shall burden God with the same. And I appeal to thy own conscience (thou unthankful unto men, and open traitor to the verity which once thou didst profess,) whether thou oftener than once hast not heard with thine ears, and that in open audience of many; that if any should take boldness to sin in hope of mercy, the cup which they should drink should be most bitter.

Page 193—196.

Let the heaven and earth (if men will not) yea, let God and his holy angels, in whose presence we walk, bear record and witness how unjustly and maliciously ye accuse us, that we provoke the people to a careless and libertine life. If ever it can be proved by our doctrine or writing, that we affirm that there is no difference betwixt virtue and vice—that the one neither pleaseth God, neither yet the other doth displease him, then let us without mercy die the death. But if the whole scope of our doctrine tend to the contrary; yea, if our lives and conversation (howsoever the devil doth blind your eyes) be such, that they alone may convict your blasphemy—and, last, if the order of that city where this doctrine is taught, be such, in punishment of iniquity, and that without respect of person, that the

like justice hath never been executed against open offenders since the days of the apostles, in any christian commonwealth—then can we not cease to desire that this your former blasphemy may be avenged upon your own heads.

We do not deny that this is one part of our doctrine—That as God's counsel is immutable, so is his election sure and stable, insomuch that the elect cannot finally be reprobated, neither can the reprobate ever become elect, no more than the wheat can become darnel, or darnel become wheat. But do we add no more than this? Do we teach men to sit cock on hoop, and so to let the world slide, as scoffingly ye write? Or, do we not rather continually affirm, that as God of his great mercy hath called us to the dignity of his children, so hath he sanctified us, and appointed us to walk in pureness and holiness all the days of our life, that we should continually fight against the lusts and inordinate affection that remain in this our corrupt nature; that if we find not the Spirit of Christ working in us, then we can never be assured of our election? For the conscience of all such as without bridle follow iniquity, can never be assured of God's present favour, during the time that they delight in sin. Finally, none of your sort require greater obedience to be given unto God, and unto his law, than we do, except ye put your scholars in vain expectation that by the power of their own free will, they may at length come to such perfection, that no sin shall stir in them. But we on the contrary, attributing all to the free grace of God, do affirm that continually in this life we must confess that sin so remaineth in us, that except God, for Christ Jesus's sake, did pardon the same, his wrath justly should be kindled against us. Let all our writings and the whole sum of our doctrine bear record, whether thus we teach or not. And are not the lives and honest conversation of many thousands, (we praise God of his great mercy,) professing the same doctrine, able to convince your malice? How many have left their countries, possessions, and lands, and for liberty of their conscience only, do live a sober and contented life? How many have given, and daily do give, their lives and blood for the testimony of Christ's truth, and because they will not defile themselves with idolatry?

And yet thou art not ashamed to ask how many of them can we perceive by their conversation, that they have cast

off the old man, and put on the new man, walking sincerely in their vocation? Shall not the great multitude of Christ's dear martyrs of late in England, the long patience of our brethren in France, and that cruel persecution of late risen in Italy, Naples, and Spain, for Christ's truth only, put thy venomous tongue to silence? If I should demand of thee which of the two did most mortify the flesh; he that for conscience sake leaveth country, friends, riches, and honours; or he that, to gape for worldly promotions, or yet for any other purpose, doth cover himself with Esau's clothes, (I use your own terms,) and so denying what he is, will swear, if need be, that he is not Jacob—which of these two, I say, dost thou think to have come nearest to the forsaking himself? Or yet another, Whether does he walk most sincerely in his vocation, that living upon his just labours, is ready to communicate according to his ability to the necessity of his poor brethren; or he who, loitering in one place, or trotting from country to country, would have all things in common, contrary to the order of nature and policy? Or yet the third, Which of them does most crucify the lusts and concupiscences of the flesh—he that lays down his neck even under the axe of a cruel and unjust magistrate, and that also when he suffers unrighteously; or he that would abolish and destroy the good ordinance of God, all lawful magistrates, and distinction in policies?

Page 218—220.

Ye accuse us as though we made no difference between vice and virtue; sin and justice:—neither yet between Adam and David as they were elected in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid, and between Adam transgressing, and David committing adultery and murder. Ye further seem to charge us as though we should affirm that God hated not sin, neither yet that he respected vice. If our short, plain, and unfeigned confession satisfy you in these three doubts, I have good hope that after this ye shall have no occasion to suspect us in such causes.

First:—Before God; before his holy angels in heaven; and before his congregation on earth; we protest and acknowledge that sin, vice, and all kinds of iniquity are, and ever have been, so odious in the presence of God, that he

never suffered the same to be unpunished in any of his elect children. That for the same, not only death but common calamities have apprehended all mankind ever since the first transgression. That virtue, justice, and civil honesty (besides the justice of the regenerate children) have so pleased God, that for love of the same he hath maintained, and to this day doth maintain, commonwealths, albeit that many grievous crimes are committed in the same. As God (we say and affirm) loveth equity, justice, chastity, truth, mercy, and temperance, so doth he in some sort highly reward the same, and hateth unrighteousness, filthy life, deceit, excess, cruelty, and riotous living, which often he punishes even in man's eyes. And this difference, we say, God maketh even amongst those that are not regenerate, and were never called to the true knowledge of salvation. And thus much briefly, for the first, second, and third.

This difference we make betwixt Adam and David elected in Christ Jesus, and Adam and David transgressing God's holy commandment and will revealed. Adam and David, elected in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid, were so loved in the same Lord Jesus their head, that when they had most horribly fallen and offended, yet did God seek Adam, call upon him, gently reason with him, and at length, convicting his conscience of his offence, he made unto him that most joyful promise of reconciliation. Of the same love (we say) it proceeds, that God did send the prophet Nathan to David the offender, that, by the fiction of another person he let him see the horror of his sin, that he did first terrify and beat down his conscience, and afterward most tenderly did erect and lift it up from the pit of desperation. All these graces, say we, proceeded from God's immutable love, which remained constant both towards the one and towards the other—and that because they neither were beloved nor elected in themselves, but in Christ Jesus their head, who neither did transgress nor offend in any jot against the will of his heavenly Father.

But Adam and David transgressing and horribly falling from God, were so hated in themselves, and for their sins, that, first, it behoved the innocent Son of God, by his death, to make a satisfaction for their sins, as also for the sins of all God's children. And, secondly, we say, preach, write, and maintain, that sin was so odious before God,

that his justice could do none other but inflict upon Adam and his posterity the penalty of bodily death, the punishments and plagues which daily we see apprehend God's children. Upon David he executed his just judgment, which in these words he pronounced,—"Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised me, and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he will lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun; for thou didst it secretly, but I shall do this thing before all Israel and before the sun." (2 Sam. xii.) This sentence, I say, most justly pronounced, was afterward most sharply, and yet most justly (for sin committed,) put in execution. And so do we affirm, that none of God's children, be they ever so dear, shall escape punishment, if contemptuously they transgress.

Page 235.

If it seem strange to you, that God loved sinners in Christ, besides the places that are afore alleged for probation of that part, hear what the verity itself pronounceth. "So God loved the world," saith our Master, "that his only begotten Son hath he given." Whomsoever ye shall understand under the name of the world, ye cannot exclude sinners from it. Where ye most irreverently ask, What then need they of Christ to reconcile them? I answer, with greater fear and reverence than alas you declare, Even such need they have of Christ, as the body hath of the soul, or yet the living man of wholesome nutriment; yea, much more, for although the body have life by the means of meat and drink, yet have the elect neither life nor reconciliation but by Christ Jesus; yea, and that by the means of his death and passion; by which, just payment and satisfaction is made to God's justice, for their sins. And so are they reconciled, who by nature are enemies to God. We do not deny but that Christ's death is sufficient to redeem the sins of the whole world; but because all do not receive it with faith, which is the free gift of God, given to the chosen children; therefore the unfaithful abide in just condemnation.

Page 294—296.

As touching the secret will of God, we affirm that our eternal election in Christ Jesus, our temporal falling in Adam, our restitution to life by the promise made, are not secret but manifestly revealed. But why it so pleased his infinite wisdom and goodness to dispose and before ordain the mystery of our salvation ; that first we should bear the image of the earthly and carnal Adam, before we should bear the image of the heavenly and spiritual ;—that first we should be all wrapped in sin, and by reason thereof in misery and death, before we should be perfect, just, and come to felicity and life everlasting ;—and, finally, why it pleased His Majesty to choose some, and of this same mass to reject others ; we say, is not revealed, neither yet shall be revealed, before Christ Jesus appear in his glory, when the books shall be opened, and all secrets shall be disclosed.

To speak the matter as simply as I can, that ye may have no occasion to complain of obscurity, I say, that God's will in these subsequents, and in many others of his wondrous works, is secret. First, Why did not God more suddenly create the world ? Why gave he to Adam no greater strength ? Why did he permit him to fall ? Why did he not provide man's redemption by some other means, than by the cruel and ignominious death of his own Son ? Why did he choose the seed of Abraham to be his people, refusing and rejecting, as it were, the rest of the world ? And finally, that God would that his dear Son should die in Jerusalem, called his own city by reason of the temple and sacrifices appointed there ? Why, I say, God, by the figures of the law, and by his prophets, had before spoken, that the Messias should suffer in that city, and that the builders, who then only in earth were reputed and known to be the church of God, should reject and refuse the chief corner stone, Christ Jesus ?

In these and others of the wondrous works of God, which so far exceed the reach of our understanding, that they are more able to quench and swallow up all light which remains in us, than is the great depth of the sea to devour our frail bodies, we hold the secret will of God for a rule of all equity, perfection, and sufficiency. We teach and affirm, that if any man, of vain curiosity or of devilish

pride, presume to define or determine upon these or others of his inscrutable secrets, the causes whereof (other than his secret and most just will) are not, neither shall be revealed till the full glory of the sons of God be manifested. when the wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy of God shall so evidently appear, to the full contentation of his elect, and to the most just convicting of the consciences of the very reprobate, to whom shall be left no place of excuse; but in their own consciences they shall receive the just sentence of their most just condemnation, and so shall they in torments glorify the most just and most severe judgment of God, and his unspeakable hatred conceived against sin. We teach and affirm, I say, that if any man in this life labour to search out other causes of these aforesaid works of God than his secret will, that the same man casts himself headlong into horrible confusion, which he cannot escape without speedy repentance. And against such men all the scriptures by you alleged, are spoken, and written, and not against us; who affirm nothing which God's word does not plainly teach us, and cease curiously to inquire any cause of his works, other than it has pleased his godly wisdom and mercy to reveal unto us by his Holy Spirit, plainly speaking in his holy scriptures.

Page 324—328.

The will of God must not be restrained to those things which externally we see done, or hear to have been done. But God's will must be extended to those ends for which God worketh, and causeth all things to be wrought from the beginning. Namely, for the manifestation of his own glory, for the profit and salvation of his elect children, and for the execution of his just judgments; either for a time to correct his chosen, or else for ever to punish the stubborn and disobedient of the reprobate sort. Because I suspect no man to be so foolish that he will deny the will of God working to these ends to be most just and holy, and most perfect in itself, I will not labour to prove that part. But because the instruments by whom God worketh are divers, we must first inquire and know what instruments they are that obey God's will, and therefore by him are reputed just workers, and what they are that obey not

his will, and so, whatsoever they do, are reputed disobedient. Only those instruments do obey God's will, who, having his will clearly revealed unto them, do study and endeavour themselves to obey, accomplish, and fulfil the same, and that of very love, free mind, and zeal to obey his godly Majesty...

And so, I say, that they only obey God, who, knowing his will, do study to obey the same. But, contrariwise, whosoever doth anything ignorant of God's will, not knowing the revealed will of God, repugns, or does contrary to the same, (howsoever he serveth God's eternal purpose) he doth neither obey God, neither can he be excusable before God's justice ; and that because in his work and fact, he looketh not to God's will, neither yet to the end and purpose which God respecteth. And hereof springs and arises the difference betwixt the works of God and the works of man ; yea, betwixt the works of the godly, and the works of the ungodly. God worketh all his works to manifest his glory, his wisdom, his power, his mercy, goodness, and justice. The godly, moved by the Holy Spirit, work their works to give obedience unto God, to support their brethren in their necessities at his commandment, and to punish vice according to his law. But the ungodly, carried headlong by their own lusts, and by the fury of satan, to whose power they are committed, work all their works to revenge themselves, to destroy such as they hate, and to promote their own enterprizes, without any respect had to God, his will, ordinance, or counsel.

One or two examples shall make this matter more plain. The will, counsel, and purpose of God in punishing Job, was to try his patience, and of the same to leave an example to all them that truly fear God to the end. And who dare deny this to be most reasonable and most just—that God, examining sharply one of his children, shall make him a schoolmaster to all the rest? But what was the will and purpose of satan and of the Chaldeans, by whom Job was punished? The will and purpose of satan is clearly revealed to have been, that by those afflictions he fully purposed to withdraw Job from God's fear, and to cause him to curse God to his face. The will of the Chaldeans is evident enough, by the manifest malice of all such oppressors, who look to nothing but to satisfy their own covetous minds by the possessions of others, which

tyrannously and unjustly they by violence spoil. And thus doth the diversity in the minds of the workers make the plain difference betwixt their works.

Another; God in expelling David from his kingdom, in giving his wives with great ignominy to be defiled by his own son Absalom, and in commanding Shimei to curse him, had respect unto his own justice, which cannot suffer sin to be unpunished even in his dearest children, thereby leaving example to all ages following, that such as willingly would not suffer God's grievous plagues, shall avoid manifest contempt of his holy commandments. And this, I think, all men will confess to be a work, in so far as it is wrought by God, most just, and most equal; for as God doth honour them that honour him, so must they be contemned who contemn him. But what was the mind of Ahithophel, counsellor of Absalom the incestuous adulterer, and of Shimei the blasphemous curser? The one studied to make such hatred betwixt the father and the son, as afterward should never be reconciled; the unnatural and monstrous son declaring himself mortal enemy to his father, according to the wicked counsel, thought to bind unto himself the hearts of the people. And Shimei, willing to make David odious to all men, and to have brought him, if possible it had been, to uttermost desperation, poured forth the venom which before lurked in his hidden and corrupted stomach.

The same might I show in the precious death of the innocent Son of God, in which the great and unsearchable love of God toward us doth shine; so that Christ's death, in so far as it was the work of God, proceeded from love, from mercy, and justice; but touching the instruments whom God used in execution of the same, as in another place I have said, they looked nothing to God's counsel, but were altogether carried to iniquity; some by avarice, some by pride and by ambition, some by malice, hatred, and envy; so that, amongst them all, none are found that studied to obey God, nor his holy revealed will. And thus it is evident why the work of God in such cases is just and good, as that it is wrought in wisdom, mercy, and justice, and that for most just causes, purpose, and end: and why the works of wicked men (supposing that God in some respect will them) are yet unjust and repugning to his will, never done to obey him, and therefore are they and their workers subject to malediction, vengeance, and

damnation, pronounced by God in his law against the workers of iniquity.

Now let us examine your reason. "If it was God's will (say you) that Pharaoh should refuse to let the people go, then he submitted himself to the word of the Lord." I deny the consequent, for neither did Pharaoh know the holy will of God, neither did he submit himself to that which was commanded and revealed unto him. The will of God was, in that people to give an example and testimony to the world, that the benediction of God alone was sufficient to give multiplication and increase to his church, even against the determinate fury of satan and of all the wicked; that he would give unto his church being afflicted, most joyous and most wondrous deliverance; and finally, that no obstinate enemy of God's people (howsoever they seem to rage and triumph) shall in the end escape the justly deserved judgment and vengeance. Do you think that Pharaoh either knew this will of God, or that he retained the people in bondage for any of these ends? I think not; then he did not submit himself to God's will, but obstinately did resist so far of God's will as was revealed unto him. And therefore, I say, that God and Pharaoh were of most contrary wills, and most contrary minds. God willing his name, his power, and his wisdom to be preached and praised to the end, for the deliverance of his afflicted people; but Pharaoh willing to retain in perpetual bondage the people whom God commanded him to set in freedom and liberty, to serve him as he should command. And therefore, although that wicked Pharaoh was an instrument by whom those things were brought to pass, yet were his works neither well nor justly done; but tyrannously, and most obstinately, did he fight against God; and therefore in the end most justly was he punished.

Page 345—347.

Whereas you affirm, that albeit there are some secrets of God unknown to us, yet is the judgment of God known and made manifest to us in the word; I would ask of you, if ye can, by the plain word, assign causes of all God's judgments from the beginning, and of those judgments which that day shall be put in execution, when the

secrets of all hearts shall be revealed? And if you are able so to do, ye shall be profitably occupied, (as I think,) if by your plain and simple writing ye would study to put an end to this controversy, the chief point whereof stands in this, that we affirm, that causes able to satisfy the curiosity of man cannot be assigned from God's plain scriptures, why God permitted a great number of his angels to fall, of whom he hath redeemed none, but reserveth them to judgment? Why God did suffer man to fall, and yet of one mass elected some vessels of mercy to honour, and appointed others for sin to damnation? And finally, as before I have said, Why God deferred the sending of his Son so long, and why, also, his second coming is so long delayed? If ye will answer that these two last are resolved by the scriptures, the one to be as the apostle writes, lest the fathers should have been made perfect without us; (Heb. xi.) and the other, that the number of God's elect children might be fully complete—we confess this to be a reason most strong, and sufficient for all God's children, neither yet do we require any other; but the curious brain will not be so quieted, but it will still demand, May not God in one moment, if so it pleases him, fulfil the number of his chosen children, as well as he of nothing did create the heaven and the earth, and shortly in the space of six natural days, set all things in perfect order?

Consider with yourselves what you take in hand, if ye will affirm that all God's judgments are so known, that a sufficient reason of every one may be assigned from the word. And if you say, there are some things secret, then consider, I beseech you, that the Holy Ghost has never made mention of any greater secret than that which lieth hid in God's most just judgments, which Paul affirms to be incomprehensible; and David saith, They are deep and so profound, that neither can the understanding of man, nor of angel, reach to the bottom of the same.

Why ye should accuse us that we should affirm, that God shall judge the world, not according to Christ's gospel plainly revealed, but according to some other secret will, I see neither cause nor reason. For no men do more constantly abide by that which is written and revealed, no men do less care to seek for new revelations or uncertain authorities, than we do. Our continual doctrine is, that God shall absolve from damnation such as by true faith embrace his dear Son Christ Jesus; and shall condemn to

inextinguishable fire all infidels, and all such as delight in manifest impiety and wickedness. And this judgment do we believe that God shall pronounce by his Son Christ Jesus, to whom all judgment is given. And for no other secret will, in that matter, do we search.

Page 371, 372.

The Lord himself saith unto Jeremiah; Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have ordained thee above nations and kingdoms, that thou mayest root out, destroy, and scatter, and that thou mayest also build up and plant. And unto Paul it was said, And now I will deliver thee from the nations to the which I send thee, that thou mayest open the eyes of those that are blind, that they may turn from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan unto God. These words do witness that the effectual power of God doth work with the word, which he putteth into the mouths of his true messengers, insomuch that either it doth edify, lighten, or mollify to salvation; or else it doth destroy, darken, and harden. For the word of God is of the nature of Christ Jesus; and he is not only come to illuminate and to raise up, but also to make blind, and to beat down; as he himself doth witness, saying, I am come for judgment into this world, that those that see not shall see, and that those that see shall be blind. And Simeon saith, Behold, this is he that is put in resurrection and in ruin of many in Israel. (Luke ii.) Insomuch that upon whom that stone of offence falleth, it shall bruise him to powder. And, therefore, we cannot admit that the ministry of his blessed word, preached or published by his faithful messengers, is nothing else but a simple declaration what men are. No; we know that it is the power of God to salvation to all those that believe; that the message of reconciliation is put in their mouth; that the word which they preach hath such efficacy and strength, that it divideth asunder the joints and sinews, the bones from the marrow; that the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but are powerful in God, to the beating down of all strong holds, by the which the true messengers beat down all counsels, and all height which is raised up against the knowledge of God; by the which, also, they lead into bondage all cogitations, to obey Christ. We know further

that they have vengeance in readiness against all disobedience; that fire passeth forth of their mouth, which devoureth their enemies; that they have power to shut the heaven, that rain descend not in the days of their prophecy. (Rev. xi.) That God's power both in the one sort, and in the other, is contained with his word, even preached, pronounced, and forespoken by his messengers, all examples in God's scriptures do witness.

Page 382.

We constantly affirm, that the brightness of our God doth so blind nature and reason, as they now are corrupted, that the natural man can never attain to those things which appertain to God, to the knowledge of his will, nor yet to his true honour. For we know that the world hath not known God by wisdom, but, thinking themselves most wise, have become most vain, insomuch that they have worshipped the creature more than the Creator. And thus we believe that nature and reason are not only unable to lead us to the true knowledge of God, by which we may attain to life everlasting, but also we affirm that they have been mistresses of all error and idolatry. And therefore we say, that nature and reason do lead men from the true God, but are never able to teach us, neither to express to us the eternal, the true, and everliving God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Further, we hesitate not to embrace, to believe, to reverence, and to honour the majesty of our God, who hath made division betwixt one sort of men and another, as we have before plainly proved.

Page 387, 388.

The words of the evangelist, (John i.) are plainly wrested by you. For he affirms not, that every man is illuminated to salvation, neither yet that Christ is offered (as ye would shift) to every man. But speaking of the excellency of Christ Jesus, in whom was life, and by whom all things were created, he saith: "This was the true light, which doth illuminate all men who come into this world." In this word, he speaks nothing of man's redemption, neither yet of any light which man receives necessary for the

same; but only of that light which was given to man in his creation; a part whereof, how small soever it be, yet remains in man, not by his own power, but by the free gift of God, in whom we live, are moved, and have our being.

And that the evangelist speaks nothing of the light of our redemption, is evident by his own words. For before and after he doth witness, that the light did shine in darkness, but darkness did not apprehend it, that is, receive and acknowledge it. That he came amongst his own, but his own did not receive him. That such as did receive him, were neither born of blood nor of the will of the flesh, neither yet of the will of man, but of God. By which words it is manifest that the evangelist most evidently declares, that the light of salvation is not common to all, but that it is proper to those only that are born of God. He further teaches that all reason and natural understanding, which man hath by his first birth, is so choked, so blinded, and extinguished, that man must needs be born again, before he can see the kingdom of God; that Christ Jesus must needs illuminate those that are born blind, or else, without remedy, they shall perish in their blindness.

Page 402, 403.

There are two sorts of sinners, the one are they who mourn, lament, and bewail their own wretchedness, and misery, unfeignedly before God, confessing not only that their whole nature is sinful and corrupt, but also that daily they so offend the majesty of their God, that they deserve most justly the torments of hell, if Christ's justice, and Christ's mediation, which by faith they embrace, should not deliver them from the wrath to come. To these sin is not imputed, for the blood of Christ cleanseth them from all sin, his advocation and intercession makes to them an entrance to the throne of their Father's grace. To them is given the spirit of sanctification, which, from time to time, reveals their sins, and mortifies and cleanses the same.—But there is another sort of sinners far different from these. For they are neither displeased with themselves, nor yet hate they iniquity, but they run furiously against God's express commandments.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED

BY JOHN KNOX,

Minister of Christ Jesus, in the church of Edinburgh, upon Sunday, August 19, 1565.

For the which he was forbidden to preach for a season.

The time is come that men cannot abide the sermon of truth or wholesome doctrine.

HENRY DARNLEY (king of Scotland by his marriage with queen Mary,) went sometimes to mass with the queen, and sometimes attended the protestant sermons. To silence the rumours then circulated of his having forsaken the reformed religion, he, on the 19th of August, 1565, attended service at St. Giles's church, sitting on a throne which had been prepared for him. Knox preached that day on Isaiah xxvi. 13, 14, and happened to prolong the service beyond the usual time. In one part of the sermon, he quoted these words of scripture, "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them: children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." In another part he referred to God's displeasure against Ahab, because he did not correct his idolatrous wife Jezebel. No particular application of these passages was made by Knox, but the king considered them as reflecting upon the queen and himself, and returned to the palace in great wrath. He refused to dine, and went out to hawking.

That same afternoon Knox was summoned from his bed to appear before the council. He went accompanied by several respectable inhabitants of the city. The secretary informed him of the king's displeasure at his sermon, and desired that he would abstain from preaching for fifteen or twenty days. Knox answered, that he had spoken nothing but according to his text, and if the church would command him either to preach or abstain, he would obey so far as the word of God would permit him. The king and queen left Edinburgh during the week following, and it does not appear that Knox was actually suspended from preaching.—*Knox, History of the Reformation. M'Cries' Life of Knox.*

PREFACE.

John Knox, the servant of Jesus Christ in preaching of his holy gospel, to the benevolent reader desires grace and peace, with the spirit of righteous judgment.

WONDER not, christian reader, that, notwithstanding all my study and labour in the scriptures of God, these twenty years, I have set forth nothing in expounding any portion of scripture, except this rude and indigested sermon, preached in the public audience of the church of Edinburgh, the 19th of August, 1565. That I did not in writing communicate my judgment upon the scriptures, I have ever thought myself to have most just reason; for considering myself rather called of my God to instruct the ignorant, comfort the sorrowful, confirm the weak, and rebuke the proud, by tongue and lively voice, in these most corrupt days, than to compose books for the age to come, seeing that so much is written by men of most singular erudition, and yet so little well observed, I decreed to contain myself within the bounds of that vocation whereunto I found myself especially called.

I dare not deny, lest that in so doing I should be injurious to the giver, but that God has revealed unto me secrets unknown to the world; and also, that he has made my tongue a trumpet to forewarn realms and nations; yea, certain great revelations of mutations and changes when no such things were feared, nor yet were appearing; a portion whereof the world cannot deny, be it ever so blind, are fulfilled; and the rest, alas! I fear, shall follow with greater haste, and in more full perfection, than my sorrowful heart desires. Notwithstanding these revelations and assurances, I ever abstained from committing anything to writing, contented only to have obeyed the charge of Him who commanded me to cry.

If any then will ask, To what purpose this sermon alone is set forth, and greater matters omitted? I answer, To let such as satan has not altogether blinded, see upon how small occasions great offence is now conceived. This sermon is it, for which, from my bed, I was called before the council; and, after long reasoning, I was by some

forbidden to preach in Edinburgh, so long as the king and queen were in town. This sermon is it, that so offends such as would please the court, and will not appear to be enemies to the truth; yet they dare affirm, that I exceeded the bounds of God's messenger. I have therefore faithfully committed unto writing whatsoever I could remember might have been offensive in that sermon; to the end, that the enemies of God's truth, as well as the professors of the same, may either note unto me wherein I have offended, or at the least cease to condemn me before they have convinced me by God's manifest word.

If any man think it easy unto me, to mitigate by my pen the inconsiderate sharpness of my tongue, and so men cannot freely judge of that my sermon,—I answer, That I am neither so impudent, that I will study to abuse the world in this great light; neither yet so void of the fear of my God, that I will avow a lie in his own presence. And no less do I esteem it to be a lie, to deny or conceal that which in his name I have once pronounced, than to affirm, that God has spoken, when his word assures me not of the same. For in the public place I consult not with flesh and blood, what I shall propose to the people; but as the Spirit of my God, who hath sent me, and unto whom I must answer, moves me, so I speak. And when I have once pronounced threatenings in his name, how unpleasant soever they be to the world, I dare no more deny them, than I dare deny that God has made me his messenger, to forewarn the disobedient of their assured destruction.

At that sermon were auditors unto me, not only professors of the truth, and such as favour me, but rank papists, dissembling hypocrites, and no small number of covetous clawbacks* of the new court. Now I will appeal to the conscience of them all, as they will answer in the presence of the eternal God, that either they bear me record, now writing the truth, or else note unto me the offensive sentences then by me pronounced, and now omitted in writing. For in God's presence I protest, that, so far as my memory would serve me, I have written more vehemently than in the action I spake and pronounced; but of purpose I have omitted persuasions and exhortations, which then were made..... (*Something is here wanting.*)

* Flatterers.

A SERMON.

Isaiah xxvi. 13, 14, 15, 16, &c.

O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation, thou art glorified; thou hast removed it far unto the ends of the earth.

Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them, &c.

As the skilful mariner (being master,) having his ship tossed with a vehement tempest, and contrary winds, is compelled oft to traverse, lest that, either by too much resisting to the violence of the waves, his vessel might be overwhelmed; or by too much liberty granted, might be carried whither the fury of the tempest would, so that his ship should be driven upon the shore, and make shipwreck: even so doth our prophet Isaiah in this text, which now you have heard read. For he, foreseeing the great desolation that was decreed in the council of the Eternal, against Jerusalem and Judah, namely, that the whole people, that bare the name of God, should be dispersed; that the holy city should be destroyed; the temple wherein was the ark of the covenant, and where God had promised to give his own presence, should be burnt with fire; and the king taken, his sons in his own presence murdered, his own eyes immediately after be put out; the nobility, some cruelly murdered, some shamefully led away captives; and finally, the whole seed of Abraham

rased, as it were, from the face of the earth. The prophet, I say, fearing these horrible calamities, doth, as it were, sometimes suffer himself, and the people committed to his charge, to be carried away with the violence of the tempest, without further resistance than by pouring forth his and their dolorous complaints before the majesty of God, as in the 13th, 17th, and 18th verses of this present text we may read. At other times he valiantly resists the desperate tempest, and pronounces the fearful destruction of all such as trouble the church of God; which he pronounces that God will multiply, even when it appears utterly to be exterminated. But because there is no final rest to the whole body till the Head return to judgment, he exhorts the afflicted to patience, and promises a visitation whereby the wickedness of the wicked shall be disclosed, and finally recompensed in their own bosoms.

These are the chief points of which, by the grace of God, we intend more largely at this present to speak;

First, The prophet saith, "O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have ruled us."

This, no doubt, is the beginning of the dolorous complaint, in which he complains of the unjust tyranny that the poor afflicted Israelites sustained during the time of their captivity. True it is, that the prophet was gathered to his fathers in peace, before this came upon the people: for a hundred years after his decease the people were not led away captive; yet he, foreseeing the assurance of the calamity, did before-hand indite and dictate unto them the complaint, which afterward they should make. But at the first sight it appears, that the complaint has but small weight; for what new thing was it, that other lords than God in his own person ruled them, seeing that such had been their government from the beginning? For who knows not, that Moses, Aaron, and Joshua, the judges, Samuel, David, and other godly rulers, were men, and not God; and so other lords than God ruled them in their greatest prosperity.

For the better understanding of this complaint, and of the mind of the prophet, we must, *first*, observe from whence all authority flows; and, *secondly*, to what end powers are appointed by God: which two points being discussed, we shall better understand, what lords and what authority rule beside God, and who they are in whom God and his merciful presence rules.

The *first* is resolved to us by the words of the apostle, saying, "There is no power but of God." David brings in the eternal God speaking to judges and rulers, saying, "I have said, ye are gods, and sons of the Most High." (Psal. lxxxii.) And Solomon, in the person of God, affirmeth the same, saying, "By me kings reign, and princes discern the things that are just." From which place it is evident, that it is neither birth, influence of stars, election of people, force of arms, nor finally, whatsoever can be comprehended under the power of nature, that makes the distinction betwixt the superior power and the inferior, or that establishes the royal throne of kings; but it is the only and perfect ordinance of God, who willeth his terror, power, and majesty, partly to shine in the thrones of kings, and in the faces of judges, and that for the profit and comfort of man. So that whosoever would study to deface the order of government that God has established, and allowed by his holy word, and bring in such a confusion, that no difference should be betwixt the upper powers and the subjects, does nothing but avert and turn upside down the very throne of God, which he wills to be fixed here upon earth; as in the end and cause of this ordinance more plainly shall appear: which is the *second* point we have to observe, for the better understanding of the prophet's words and mind.

The end and cause then, why God imprints in the weak and feeble flesh of man this image of his own power and majesty, is not to puff up flesh in opinion of itself; neither yet that the heart of him, that is exalted above others, should be lifted up by presumption and pride, and so despise others; but that he should consider he is appointed lieutenant to One, whose eyes continually watch upon him, to see and examine how he behaves himself in his office. St. Paul, in few words, declares the end wherefore the sword is committed to the powers, saying, "It is to the punishment of the wicked doers, and unto the praise of such as do well." Rom. xiii.

Of which words it is evident, that the sword of God is not committed to the hand of man, to use as it pleases him, but only to punish vice and maintain virtue, that men may live in such society as is acceptable before God. And this is the true and only cause why God has appointed powers in this earth.

For such is the furious rage of man's corrupt nature,

that, unless severe punishment were appointed and put in execution upon malefactors, better it were that man should live among brutes and wild beasts than among men. But at this present I dare not enter into the description of this common-place; for so should I not satisfy the text, which by God's grace I purpose to explain. This only by the way—I would that such as are placed in authority should consider, whether they reign and rule by God, so that God rules them; or if they rule without, besides, and against God, of whom our prophet here complains.

If any desire to take trial of this point, it is not hard; for Moses, in the election of judges, and of a king, describes not only what persons shall be chosen to that honour, but also gives to him that is elected and chosen, the rule by which he shall try himself, whether God reign in him or not, saying, "When he shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom, he shall write to himself an exemplar of this law, in a book by the priests and Levites; it shall be with him, and he shall read therein, all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the words of his law, and these statutes, that he may do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left." Deut. xvii.

The same is repeated to Joshua, in his inauguration to the government of the people, by God himself, saying, "Let not the book of this law depart from thy mouth, but meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest keep it, and do according to all that which is written in it. For then shall thy way be prosperous, and thou shall do prudently." Josh. i.

The *first* thing then that God requires of him, who is called to the honour of a king, is, The knowledge of his will revealed in his word.

The *second* is, An upright and willing mind, to put in execution such things as God commands in his law, without declining to the right, or to the left hand.

Kings then have not an absolute power, to do in their government what pleases them, but their power is limited by God's word; so that if they strike where God has not commanded, they are but murderers; and if they spare where God has commanded to strike, they and their throne are criminal and guilty of the wickedness which abounds upon the face of the earth, for lack of punishment.

O that kings and princes would consider what account shall be craved of them, as well of their ignorance and misknowledge of God's will, as for the neglecting of their office! But now, to return to the words of the prophet. In the person of the whole people he complains unto God, that the Babylonians (whom he calls, "other lords besides God," both because of their ignorance of God, and by reason of their cruelty and inhumanity,) had long ruled over them in great rigour, without pity or compassion upon the ancient men, and famous matrons: for they, being mortal enemies to the people of God, sought by all means to aggravate their yoke, yea, utterly to exterminate the memory of them, and of their religion, from the face of the earth.

After the first part of this dolorous complaint, the prophet declares the protestation of the people, saying, "Nevertheless in thee shall we remember thy name," (others read it, But we will remember thee only, and thy name;) but in the Hebrew there is no conjunction copulative in that sentence. The mind of the prophet is plain, namely, that notwithstanding the long sustained affliction, the people of God declined not to a false and vain religion, but remembered God, who sometime appeared to them in his merciful presence; which although they saw not then, yet they would still remember his name—that is, they would call to mind the doctrine and promise, which formerly they heard, although in their prosperity they did not sufficiently glorify God, who so mercifully ruled in the midst of them. The temptation, no doubt, of the Israelites was great in those days; they were carried captives from the land of Canaan, which was to them the gage and pledge of God's favour towards them: for it was the inheritance that God promised to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. The league and covenant of God's protection appeared to have been broken—they lamentably complain that they saw not their accustomed signs of God's merciful presence. The true prophets were few, and the abominations used in Babylon were exceedingly many: and so it might have appeared to them, that in vain it was that they were called the posterity of Abraham, or that ever they had received the law, or form of right religion from God. That we may the better feel it in ourselves, the temptation, I say, was even such, as if God should utterly destroy all order and policy that this day is within his

church—that the true preaching of the word should be suppressed—the right use of sacraments abolished—idolatry and papistical abomination erected up again; and therewith, that our bodies should be taken prisoners by Turks, or other manifest enemies of God, and of all godliness. Such, I say, was their temptation; how notable then is this their confession that in bondage they make, namely, That they will remember God only; although he has appeared to turn his face from them, they will remember his name, and will call to mind the deliverance promised!

Hereof have we to consider, what is our duty, if God bring us to the like extremity, as for our offences and unthankfulness justly he may. This confession is not the fair flattering words of hypocrites, lying and bathing in their pleasures; but it is the mighty operation of the Spirit of God, who leaves not his own destitute of some comfort, in their most desperate calamities. This then is our duty, not only to confess our God in time of peace and quietness, but he chiefly craves, that we avow him in the midst of his and our enemies; and this is not in us to do, but it behoves that the Spirit of God work in us, above all power of nature; and thus we ought earnestly to meditate before the battle rise more vehement, which appears not to be far off. But now must we somewhat more deeply consider these judgments of God.

This people dealt with thus, as we have heard, were the only people upon the face of the earth to whom God was rightly known; among them only were his laws, statutes, ordinances, and sacrifices, used and put in practice; they only invocated his name; and to them alone had he promised his protection and assistance. What then should be the cause, that he should give them over unto this great reproach; and bring them into such extremity that his own name, in them, should be blasphemed? The prophet Ezekiel, who saw this horrible destruction, forespoken by Isaiah, put into just execution, gives an answer in these words, "I gave unto them laws that were good, in the which whosoever should walk, should live in them; but they would not walk in my ways, but rebelled against me; and therefore, I have given unto them laws that are not good, and judgments, in the which they shall not live." (Ezek. xx.) The writers of the books of Kings and Chronicles declare this in more plain words, saying, "The Lord

sent unto them his prophets, rising early, desiring of them to return unto the Lord, and to amend their wicked ways, for he would have spared his people, and his tabernacle; but they mocked his servants, and would not return unto the Lord their God to walk in his ways." (2 Kings xvii.) Yea, Judah itself kept not the precepts of the Lord God, but walked in the manners and ordinances of Israel; that is, of such as then had declined to idolatry from the days of Jeroboam: and therefore, the Lord God abhorred the whole seed of Israel, that is, the whole body of the people; he punished them, and gave them into the hands of those that spoiled them, and so he cast them out from his presence.

Hereof it is evident, that their disobedience unto God, and unto the voices of his prophets, was the cause of their destruction. Now have we to take heed how we should use the good laws of God; that is, his will revealed unto us in his word; and that order of justice, which by him, for the comfort of man, is established amongst men. There is no doubt but that obedience is the most acceptable sacrifice unto God, and that which above all things he requires; so that when he manifests himself by his word, men should follow according to their vocation and commandment. Now so it is, that God, by that great Pastor our Lord Jesus, now manifestly in his word calls us from all impiety, as well of body as of mind, to holiness of life, and to his spiritual service; and for this purpose he has erected the throne of his mercy among us, the true preaching of his word, together with the right administration of his sacraments: but what our obedience is, let every man examine his own conscience, and consider what statutes and laws we would have to be given unto us.

Wouldst thou, O Scotland! have a king to reign over thee in justice, equity, and mercy? Subject thou thyself to the Lord thy God, obey his commandments, and magnify thou the word that calleth unto thee, "This is the way, walk in it;" (Isa. xxx.) and if thou wilt not, flatter not thyself; the same justice remains this day in God to punish thee, Scotland, and thee Edinburgh especially, which before punished the land of Judah, and the city of Jerusalem. Every realm or nation, saith the prophet Jeremiah, that likewise offendeth, shall be likewise punished. (Jer. ix.) But if thou shalt see impiety placed in the seat of justice above thee, so that in the throne of

God (as Solomon complains, Eccles. iii.) reigns nothing but fraud and violence, accuse thine own ingratitude and rebellion against God; for that is the only cause why God takes away "the strong man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the prudent and the aged, the captain and the honourable, the counsellor and the cunning artificer; and I will appoint, saith the Lord, children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. Children are extortioners of my people, and women have rule over them." Isa. iii.

If these calamities, I say, apprehend us, so that we see nothing but the oppression of good men, and of all godliness, and that wicked men without God reign above us; let us accuse and condemn ourselves, as the only cause of our own miseries. For if we had heard the voice of the Lord our God, and given upright obedience unto the same, God would have multiplied our peace, and would have rewarded our obedience before the eyes of the world. But now let us hear what the prophet saith further: "The dead shall not live," saith he, "neither shall the tyrants, nor the dead arise, because thou hast visited and scattered them, and destroyed all their memory," verse 14.

From this 14th verse, unto the end of the 19th, it appears, that the prophet observes no order; yea, that he speaks things directly repugning* one to another; for, *first*, he saith, "The dead shall not live:" afterwards, he affirms, "Thy dead men shall live." *Secondly*, he saith, "Thou hast visited and scattered them, and destroyed all their memory." Immediately after, he saith, "Thou hast increased thy nation, O Lord, thou hast increased thy nation. They have visited thee, and have poured forth a prayer before thee."

Who, I say, would not think, that these are things not only spoken without good order and purpose, but also manifestly repugning one to another? For to live, and not to live, to be so destroyed that no memorial remains, and to be so increased that the coasts of the earth shall be replenished, seems to import plain contradiction. For removing of this doubt, and for better understanding the prophet's mind, we must observe, that the prophet had to do with divers sorts of men; he had to do with the conjured† and manifest enemies of God's people, the Chaldeans or Babylonians; even so, such as profess Christ

* Opposing. † Combined.

Jesus have to do with the Turks and Saracens. He had to do with the seed of Abraham, whereof there were three sorts. The ten tribes were all degenerated from the true worshipping of God, and corrupted with idolatry, as this day are our pestilent papists in all realms and nations; there rested only the tribe of Judah at Jerusalem, where the form of true religion was observed, the law taught, and the ordinances of God outwardly kept. But yet there were in that body, I mean, in the body of the visible church, a great number that were hypocrites, as this day yet are among us that profess the Lord Jesus, and have refused papistry; also not a few that were licentious livers; some that turned their back to God, that is, had forsaken all true religion; and some that lived a most abominable life, as Ezekiel saith in his vision; and yet there were some godly, as a few wheat-corns oppressed* and hid among the multitude of chaff: now, according to this diversity, the prophet keeps divers purposes, and yet in most perfect order.

And first, after the first part of the complaint of the afflicted as we have heard, in vehemency of spirit he bursts forth against all the proud enemies of God's people, against all such as trouble them, and against all such as mock and forsake God, and saith, "The dead shall not live, the proud giants shall not rise; thou hast scattered them, and destroyed their memorial." In which words he contends against the present temptation and dolorous state of God's people, and against the insolent pride of such as oppressed them; as if the prophet should say, O ye troublers of God's people! howsoever it appears to you in this your bloody rage, that God regards not your cruelty, nor considers what violence you do to his poor afflicted, yet shall you be visited, yea, your carcases shall fall and lie as stinking carrion upon the face of the earth, you shall fall without hope of life, or of a blessed resurrection; yea, howsoever you gather your substance, and augment your families, you shall be so scattered, that you shall leave no memorial of you to the posterities to come, but that which shall be execrable and odious.

Hereof the tyrants have their admonition, and the afflicted church inestimable comfort: the tyrants that oppress, shall receive the same end which they did who have passed before; that is, they shall die and fall with shame,

* Covered over, weighed down.

without hope of resurrection, as is aforesaid. Not that they shall not arise to their own confusion and just condemnation; but that they shall not recover power, to trouble the servants of God; neither yet shall the wicked arise, as David saith, in the counsel of the just. Now the wicked have their councils, their thrones, and finally handle* (for the most part) all things that are upon the face of the earth; but the poor servants of God are reputed unworthy of men's presence, envied and mocked; yea, they are more vile before these proud tyrants, than is the very dirt and mire which is trodden under foot. But in that glorious resurrection, this state shall be changed; for then shall such as now, by their abominable living and cruelty, destroy the earth, and molest God's children, see Him whom they have pierced; they shall see the glory of such as now they persecute, to their terror and everlasting confusion. The remembrance hereof ought to make us patient in the days of affliction, and so to comfort us, that when we see tyrants in their blind rage tread under foot the saints of God, we despair not utterly, as if there were neither wisdom, justice, nor power above in the heavens, to repress such tyrants, and to redress the dolours of the unjustly afflicted. No, brethren, let us be assured, that the right hand of the Lord will change the state of things that are most desperate. In our God there is wisdom and power, in a moment to change the joy and mirth of our enemies into everlasting mourning, and our sorrows into joy and gladness that shall have no end.

Therefore, in these apparent calamities, (and marvel not that I say *apparent* calamities, for he that sees not a fire is begun, that shall burn more than we look for, unless God of his mercy quench it,† is more than blind,) let us not be discouraged, but with unfeigned repentance let us return to the Lord our God; let us accuse and condemn our former negligence, and steadfastly depend upon his promised deliverance; so shall our temporal sorrows be converted into everlasting joy. The doubt that might be moved concerning the destruction of those whom God exalteth, shall be discussed, if time will suffer, after we have passed throughout the text. The prophet, now proceeds, and saith, "Thou hast increased the nations, O Lord, thou hast increased the nations; thou art made

* Manage.

† Alluding to the political troubles of that day.

glorious, thou hast enlarged all the coasts of the earth. Lord, in trouble," &c. verses 15, 16.

In these words the prophet gives consolation to the afflicted, assuring them, that how horrible soever the desolation should be, yet should the seed of Abraham be so multiplied, that it should replenish the coasts of the earth; yea, that God should be more glorified in their affliction, than he was during the time of their prosperity. This promise, no doubt, was incredible when it was made; for who could have been persuaded, that the destruction of Jerusalem should have been the means whereby the nation of the Jews should have been increased? seeing that much rather it appeared, that the overthrow of Jerusalem should have been the very abolishing of the seed of Abraham: but we must consider, to what end it was that God revealed himself to Abraham, and what is contained in the promise of the multiplication of his seed, and the benediction promised thereto.

First, God revealed himself to Abraham, to let all flesh understand, by the means of his word, that God first called man, and revealed himself unto him; that flesh can do nothing but rebel against God; for Abraham, no doubt, was an idolater, before God called him from Ur of the Chaldees. The promise was made, that the seed of Abraham should be multiplied as the stars of heaven, and as the sand of the sea; which is not simply to be understood of his natural seed, although it was sometimes greatly increased; but rather of such as should become the spiritual seed of Abraham, as the apostle speaks. Now, if we be able to prove, that the right knowledge of God, his wisdom, justice, mercy, and power, were more amply declared in their captivity, than at any time before, then we cannot deny, but that God, even when to man's judgment he had utterly rased them from the face of the earth, did increase the nation of the Jews, so that he was glorified in them, and extended the coasts of the earth for their habitation. And, for the better understanding hereof, let us shortly try the histories from their captivity to their deliverance; and after the same, to the coming of the Messiah.

No doubt satan intended, by the dispersion of the Jews, so to have profaned the whole seed of Abraham, that among them neither should have remained the true knowledge of God, nor yet the spirit of sanctification, but that

all should have come to a like contempt of God. For, I pray you, for what purpose was it, that Daniel and his fellows were taken into the king's court, were commanded to be fed at the king's table, and were put to the schools of their diviners, soothsayers, and astrologers? It may be thought that it proceeded of the king's humanity, and of a zeal which he had, that they should be brought up in virtue and good learning; and I doubt not but it was so understood by a great number of the Jews. But the secret practice of the devil was understood by Daniel, when he refused to defile himself with the king's meat, which was forbidden to the seed of Abraham in the law of their God. Well, God began shortly after to show himself mindful of his promise made by his prophet, and to trouble Nebuchadnezzar himself, by showing to him a vision in his dream; which the more troubled him, because he could not forget the terror of it, neither yet could he remember what the vision and the parts thereof were. Whereupon were called all the diviners, interpreters of dreams, and soothsayers, of whom the king demanded, if they could let him understand what he had dreamed: but while they answered, that such a question used not to be demanded of any soothsayer or magician, for the resolution thereof only appertained to the gods, whose habitation was not with men, the charge was given, that they all should be slain; and amongst the rest, Daniel, whose innocence the devil envied, was sought to have suffered the same judgment. He claimed, and asked time to disclose that secret; (I only touch the history, to let you see by what means God increased his knowledge) which being granted, the vision was revealed unto him; he shewed the same unto the king, with the true interpretation of it; adding, that the knowledge thereof came not from the stars, but only from the God of Abraham, who alone was and is the true God. Which being understood, the king burst forth in his confession, saying, "Of a truth your God is the most excellent of all gods, and he is Lord of kings, and only he that revealeth secrets, seeing that thou couldst open this secret." And when Nebuchadnezzar after that, being puffed up with pride by the counsel of his wicked nobility, would make an image, before which he would that all tongues and nations subject to him should make adoration; and when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, would not obey his unjust

commandment, and so were cast into the flaming furnace of fire; and yet by God's angels were so preserved, that no smell of fire remained on their persons or garments; this same king gave a more notable confession, saying, "The Lord God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, is to be praised, who hath sent his angels, and delivered his worshippers that put trust in him, who have done against the king's commandment; who have rather given their own bodies to torment, than that they would worship another god, except their own God. By me therefore is there made a decree, that whosoever shall blaspheme the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, he shall be cut in pieces, and his house shall be made detestable." Dan. iii.

Thus we see how God began, even almost in the beginning of their captivity, to notify his name, to multiply his knowledge, and set forth as well his power as his wisdom, and true worshipping, by those that were taken prisoners, yea, that were despised, and of all men contemned; so that the name and fear of the God of Abraham was never before notified to so many realms and nations. This wondrous work of God proceeded from one empire to another; for Daniel being promoted to great honour by Darius king of the Persians and Medes, fell into a desperate danger; for he was committed to prison among lions, because he was found breaking the king's injunction; not that the king desired the destruction of God's servants, but because the corrupt idolaters, who in hatred of Daniel had procured that law to be made, urged the king against his nature; but God, by his angel, stopped the lions' mouths, and so preserved his servant; which being considered, with the sudden destruction of Daniel's enemies by the same lions, king Darius, besides his own confession, wrote to all people, tongues, and nations, after this form; "It is decreed by me, That in all the dominions of my kingdom, men shall fear and reverence the God of Daniel, because he is the Living God, abiding for ever, whose kingdom shall not be destroyed, and his dominion remaineth; who saveth and delivereth, and sheweth signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the lions."

This knowledge was yet further increased in the days of Cyrus, who giving freedom to the captives to return to their own native country, gave this confession; "Thus

saith Cyrus the king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given unto me, and hath commanded me, that a house be built to him in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever therefore of you, that are of his people, let the Lord his God be with him, and let him pass up to Jerusalem, and let him build the house of the Lord God of Israel; for he only is God that is in Jerusalem." (Ezra i.) Time will not suffer me to treat the points of this confession, neither yet did I for that purpose adduce the history; but only to let us see, how constantly God kept his promise in increasing his people, and in augmenting his true knowledge beyond men's expectation, when both they that were the seed of Abraham, and the religion which they professed, appeared utterly to have been extinguished. I say, he brought freedom out of bondage, light out of darkness, and life out of death. I am not ignorant, that the building of the temple, and the reparation of the walls of Jerusalem, were long stayed, so that the work had many enemies; but the hand of God so prevailed in the end, that a decree was made by Darius, (by him I suppose that succeeded to Cambyses,) not only that all things necessary for the building of the temple, and for the sacrifices that were to be burnt there, should be ministered upon the king's charges; but also, that "whosoever should hinder that work, or change that decree, that a tree should be taken out of his house, and that he should be hanged thereupon; yea, that his house should be made a dunghill," (Ezra vi.); and thereto he added a prayer, saying, "The God of heaven, who hath placed his name there, root out every king and people, (O that kings and nations would understand!) that shall put his hand, either to change or to hurt this house of God that is in Jerusalem." And so, in despite of satan, was the temple built, the walls repaired, and the city inhabited; and in the most desperate dangers it was preserved, until the promised Messiah, the glory of the second temple, came, manifested himself to the world, suffered and rose again, according to the scriptures; and so, by sending forth his gospel from Jerusalem, replenished the earth with the true knowledge of God; and so did God in perfection increase the nation, and the spiritual seed of Abraham.

Wherefore, dear brethren, we have no small consolation, if the state of all things be this day rightly considered.

We see in what fury and rage the world, for the most part, is now raised, against the poor church of Jesus Christ, unto which he has proclaimed liberty, after the fearful bondage of that spiritual Babylon, in which we have been holden captives longer space than Israel was prisoner in Babylon itself: for if we shall consider, upon the one part, the multitude of those that live wholly without Christ; and, upon the other part, the blind rage of the pestilent papists; what shall we think of the small number of them that profess Christ Jesus, but that they are as a poor sheep, already seized in the claws of the lion; yea, that they, and the true religion which they profess, shall in a moment be utterly consumed?

But against this fearful temptation, let us be armed with the promise of God, namely, that he will be the protector of his church; yea, that he will multiply it, even when to man's judgment it appears utterly to be exterminated. This promise has our God performed, in the multiplication of Abraham's seed, in the preservation of it when satan laboured utterly to have destroyed it, and in deliverance of the same, as we have heard, from Babylon. He hath sent his Son Christ Jesus, clad in our flesh, who hath tasted of all our infirmities, (sin excepted,) who hath promised to be with us to the end of the world; he hath further kept promise in the publication, yea, in the restitution of his glorious gospel. Shall we then think that he will leave his church destitute in this most dangerous age? Only let us cleave to his truth, and study to conform our lives to the same, and he shall multiply his knowledge, and increase his people. But now let us hear what the prophet saith more:

"Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them," ver. 16.

The prophet means, that such as in the time of quietness did not rightly regard God nor his judgments, were compelled, by sharp corrections, to seek God; yea, by cries and dolorous complaints to visit him. True it is, that such obedience deserves small praise before men; for who can praise, or accept that in good part, which comes as it were of mere compulsion? And yet it is rare, that any of God's children do give unfeigned obedience, until the hand of God turn them. For if quietness and prosperity make them not utterly to forget their duty, both towards God and man, as David for a season, yet it makes

them careless, insolent, and in many things unmindful of those things that God chiefly craves of them; which imperfection being espied, and the danger that thereof might ensue, our heavenly Father visits the sins of his children, but with the rod of his mercy, by which they are moved to return to their God, to accuse their former negligence, and to promise better obedience in all times hereafter; as David confessed, saying, "Before I fell in affliction I went astray, but now will I keep thy statutes."

But yet, for the better understanding of the prophet's mind, we may consider how God doth visit man, and how man doth visit God; and what difference there is betwixt the visitation of God upon the reprobate, and his visitation upon the chosen.

God sometimes visits the reprobate in his hot displeasure, pouring upon them his plagues for their long rebellion; as we have heard before, that he visited the proud, and destroyed their memory. At other times God is said to visit his people, being in affliction, to whom he sends comfort or promise of deliverance, as he visited the seed of Abraham, when oppressed in Egypt. And Zacharias said, that God had visited his people, and sent unto them hope of deliverance, when John the Baptist was born. But of none of these visitations our prophet here speaks, but of that only which we have already touched; namely, when God layeth his correction upon his own children, to call them from the venomous breasts of this corrupt world, that they suck not in over great abundance the poison thereof; and he doth, as it were, wean them from their mother's breasts, that they may learn to receive other nourishment. True it is, that this weaning (or speaning, as we term it) from worldly pleasure, is a thing strange to the flesh. And yet it is a thing so necessary to God's children, that, unless they are weaned from the pleasures of the world, they can never feed upon that delectable milk of God's eternal verity; for the corruption of the one either hinders the other from being received, or else so troubles the whole powers of man, that the soul can never so digest the truth of God as he ought to do.

Although this appears hard, yet it is most evident; for what can we receive from the world, but that which is in the world? What that is, the apostle John teaches; saying, "Whatsoever is in the world, is either the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life." (1 John ii.)

Now, seeing that these are not of the Father, but of the world, how can it be, that our souls can feed upon chastity, temperance, and humility, so long as our stomachs are replenished with the corruption of these vices?

Now so it is, that flesh can never willingly refuse these fore-named, but rather still delights itself in every one of them; yea, in them all, as the examples are but too evident.

It behoves therefore, that God himself shall violently pull his children from these venomous breasts, that when they lack the liquor and poison of the world, they may visit him, and learn to be nourished of him. Oh if the eyes of worldly princes should be opened, that they might see with what humour and liquor their souls are fed, while their whole delight consists in pride, ambition, and the lusts of the corrupt flesh! We understand then how God doth visit men, as well by his severe judgments, as by his merciful visitation of deliverance from trouble, or by bringing trouble upon his chosen for their humiliation; and now it remains to understand how man visits God. Man doth visit God, when he appears in his presence, be it for the hearing of his word, or for the participation of his sacraments; as the people of Israel, besides the observation of their sabbaths and daily oblations, were commanded thrice a-year to present themselves before the presence of the tabernacle; and as we do, and as often as we present ourselves to the hearing of the word. For there is the footstool, yea, there is the face and throne of God himself, wheresoever the gospel of Jesus Christ is truly preached, and his sacraments rightly ministered.

But men may on this sort visit God hypocritically; for they may come for the fashion, they may hear with deaf ears; yea, they may understand, and yet never determine with themselves to obey that which God requires: and let such men be assured, that He who searches the secrets of hearts will be avenged of all such; for nothing can be more odious to God, than to mock him in his own presence. Let every man therefore examine himself, with what mind, and what purpose, he comes to hear the word of God; yea, with what ear he hears it, and what testimony his heart gives unto him, when God commands virtue, and forbids impiety.

Repinest thou when God requires obedience? Thou hearest to thine own condemnation. Mockest thou at

God's threatenings? Thou shalt feel the weight and truth of them, albeit too late, when flesh and blood cannot deliver thee from his hand. But the visitation, whereof our prophet speaks, is only proper to the sons of God, who, in the time when God takes from them the pleasures of the world, or shows his angry countenance unto them, have recourse unto him, and, confessing their former negligence, with troubled hearts, cry for his mercy. This visitation is not proper to all the afflicted, but appertains only to God's children: for the reprobates can never have access to God's mercy in time of their tribulation, and that because they abuse his long patience, as well as the manifold benefits they receive from his hands; for as the same prophet heretofore saith, "Let the wicked obtain mercy, yet shall he never learn wisdom, but in the land of righteousness," that is, where the true knowledge of God abounds, "he will do wickedly." Which is a crime above all others abominable; for to what end is it that God erects his throne among us, but that we should fear him? Why does he reveal his holy will unto us, but that we should obey it? Why does he deliver us from trouble, but that we should be witnesses unto the world, that he is gracious and merciful?

Now, when men hearing their duty, and knowing what God requires of them, do malapertly fight against all equity and justice, what, I pray you, do they else, but make manifest war against God? Yea, when they have received from God such deliverance, that they cannot deny but that God himself hath in his great mercy visited them, and yet they continue wicked as before; what deserve they but effectually to be given over unto a reprobate sense, that they may headlong run to ruin, both of body and soul? It is almost incredible that a man should be so enraged against God, that neither his plagues, nor yet his mercy showed, should move him to repentance; but because the scriptures bear witness of the one and the other, let us cease to marvel, and let us firmly believe, that such things as have been, are even at present before our eyes, albeit many, blinded by affection, cannot see them.

Ahab, as it is written in the book of the Kings, received many notable benefits of the hand of God, who visited him in divers sorts, sometimes by his plagues, sometimes by his word, and sometimes by his merciful deliverance. He made him king, and, for the idolatry used by him and

his wife, he plagued the whole of Israel by famine; he revealed to him his will, and true religion, by the prophet Elijah; he gave unto him sundry deliverances, but one most special, when proud Benhadad came to besiege Samaria, and was not content to receive Ahab's gold, silver, sons, daughters, and wives, but also required, that his servants should have at their pleasure whatsoever was delectable in Samaria. True it is, that his elders and people willed him not to hear the proud tyrant, but who made unto him the promise of deliverance? And who appointed and put his army in order? Who assured him of victory? The prophet of God only, who assured him, that by the servants of the princes of the provinces, who in number were only two hundred thirty-and-two, he should defeat the great army, in which there were two-and-thirty kings, with all their forces. And as the prophet of God promised, so it came to pass; victory was obtained, not once only, but twice, and that by the merciful visitation of the Lord.

But how did Ahab visit God again for his great benefit received? Did he remove his idolatry? Did he correct his idolatrous wife Jezebel? No, we find no such thing; but the one and the other we find to have continued and increased in their former impiety: but what was the end thereof? The last visitation of God was, that dogs licked the blood of the one, and did eat the flesh of the other. In few words then we understand, what difference there is betwixt the visitation of God upon the reprobate, and his visitation upon his chosen. The reprobate are visited, but never truly humbled, nor yet amended; the chosen being visited, they sob, and they cry unto God for mercy; which being obtained, they magnify God's name, and afterwards manifest the fruits of repentance. Let us therefore that hear these judgments of our God, call for the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that howsoever it pleaseth him to visit us, we may stoop under his merciful hands, and unfeignedly cry to him when he corrects us; and so shall we know in experience, that our cries and complaints were not in vain. But let us hear what the prophet saith further:

"Like as a woman with child, that draweth near her travail, is in sorrow, and crieth in her pains, so have we been in thy sight, O Lord; we have conceived, we have borne in vain, as though we should have brought forth the

wind. Salvations were not made to the earth, neither did the inhabitants of the earth fall," verses 17, 18.

This is the second part of the prophet's complaint, in which he, in the person of God's people, complains, that of their great affliction there appeared no end. This same similitude is used by our Master Jesus Christ; for when he speaks of the troubles of his church, he compares them to the pains of a woman travailing in child-birth. But it is to another end; for there he promises exceeding and permanent joy after a sort, though it appear trouble. But here is the trouble long and vehement, albeit the fruit of it was not suddenly espied. He speaks no doubt of that long and dolorous time of their captivity, in which they continually laboured for deliverance, but obtained it not before the complete end of seventy years. During which time, the earth, that is, the land of Judah, which sometimes was sanctified unto God, but was then given to be profaned by wicked people, got no help, nor perceived any deliverance: for the inhabitants of the world fell not; that is, the tyrants and oppressors of God's people were not taken away, but still remained and continued blasphemers of God, and troublers of his church. But because I perceive the hours to pass more swiftly than they have seemed at other times, I must contract that which remains of this text into certain points.

The prophet first contends against the present despair; afterwards he introduces God himself calling upon his people; and, last of all, he assures his afflicted, that God will come, and require account of all the blood-thirsty tyrants of the earth.

First, Fighting against the present despair, he saith, "Thy dead shall live, even my body (or with my body) shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs," verse 19.

The prophet here pierces through all impediments that nature could object; and, by the victory of faith, he overcomes, not only the common enemies, but the great and last enemy of all, death itself; for this would he say, Lord, I see nothing for thy chosen, but misery to follow misery, and one affliction to succeed another; yea, in the end I see, that death shall devour thy dearest children. But yet, O Lord! I see thy promise to be true, and thy love to remain towards thy chosen, even when death appears to have devoured them: "For thy dead shall live,

yea, not only shall they live, but my very dead carcase shall arise;" and so I see honour and glory to succeed this temporal shame, I see permanent joy to come after trouble, order to spring out of this terrible confusion; and, finally, I see that life shall devour death, so that death shall be destroyed, and so thy servants shall have life. This, I say, is the victory of faith, when to the midst of death, through the light of God's word, the afflicted see life. Hypocrites, in the time of quietness and prosperity, can generally confess, that God is true to his promises; but bring them to the extremity, and there the hypocrite ceases further to trust in God, than he seeth natural means, whereby God useth to work. But the true faithful, when all hope of natural means fail, flee to God himself, and to the truth of his promise, who is above nature; yea, whose works are not so subject to the ordinary course of nature, that when nature fails, his power and promise fail also therewith.

Let us further observe, That the prophet here speaks not of all the dead in general, but saith, "Thy dead, O Lord, shall live:" in which words he makes a difference betwixt those that die in the Lord, and those that die in their natural corruption, and in the old Adam. Die in the Lord can none, except those that live in him, (I mean, of those that attain to the years of discretion;) and none live in him, but those that, with the apostle, can say, "I live, and yet not I, but Christ Jesus that dwelleth in me: the life that I now live, I have by the faith of the Son of God." (Gal. ii.) Not that I mean, that the faithful have at all hours such a sense of the life everlasting, that they fear not the death and the troubles of this life; no, not so; for the faith of God's children is weak, yea, and in many things imperfect. But I mean, that such as in death, and after death shall live, must communicate in this life with Jesus Christ, and must be regenerated by the seed of life; that is, by the word of the everlasting God, which whosoever despises, refuses life and joy everlasting.

The prophet transfers all the promises of God to himself, saying, "Even my dead body shall arise;" and immediately after, gives commandment and charge to the dwellers in the dust, that is, to the dead carcases of those that were departed, (for the spirit and soul of man dwells not in the dust,) "That they should awake, that they

should sing and rejoice;" for they should arise and spring up from the earth, even as the herbs do, after they have received the dew from above.

Time will not suffer that these particulars be so largely treated as they ought, and as I gladly would do; therefore let us consider, that the prophet, in transferring the power and promise of God to himself, does not vindicate* to himself any particular prerogative above the people of God, as that he alone should live and arise, and not they also; but he does it, to let them understand that he taught a doctrine whereof he was certain; yea, and whereof they should have experience after his death. As if he should say, My words appear to you now to be incredible, but the day will come, that I shall be taken from you, my carcase shall be inclosed in the bosom of the earth; and you shall be led away captives to Babylon, where you shall remain many days and years, as it were buried in your sepulchres.

But then call to mind what I said unto you before hand, that my body shall arise; even so shall you rise from your graves out of Babylon, and be restored to your own country, and city of Jerusalem; this, I doubt not, is the true meaning of the prophet. The charge that he gives to the dwellers in the dust, is to express the power of God's word, whereby he not only gives life, where death apparently had prevailed; but also, by it, he calls things that are not, even as though they were. True it is, that the prophet Isaiah saw not the destruction of Jerusalem, much less could he see the restitution of it with his corporeal eyes; but he leaves this, as it were, in testament with them—that when they were in the extremity of all bondage, they should call to mind what the prophet of God had before spoken.

And lest that his doctrine, and this promise of God made unto them by his mouth, should have been forgotten, as we are ever prone and ready to forget God's promises when we are pressed with any sorrow, God raised up unto them, in the midst of their calamity, his prophet Ezekiel, unto whom, among many other visions, he gave this—The hand of the Lord first led him in a place, which was full of dry and dispersed bones. (Ezek. xxxvii.) The question was demanded of the prophet, If these bones, being wondrous dry, could live? The prophet answered,

* Claim.

The knowledge thereof appertained unto God. Charge was given unto him, that he should speak unto the dry bones, and say, "Thus saith the Lord God to these bones, Behold, I will give you breath, and you shall live: I will give unto you sinews, flesh, and skin, and you shall live." And while the prophet spake as he was commanded, he heard a voice, and he saw every bone join its fellow; he saw them covered with flesh and skin, albeit there was no spirit of life in them. He was commanded again to speak, and to say, "Thus saith the Lord God, Come, O Spirit, from the four quarters, and blow on these that are slain, that they may live." And as he prophesied, the spirit of life came; they lived, and stood upon their feet. Then the Lord interprets what this vision meant, saying, "O son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, our hope is perished, we are plainly cut off. But behold, saith the Lord, I will open your graves, I will bring you forth of them, ye shall live, and come unto the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

This vision, I say, given to the prophet, and by the prophet preached to the people, when they thought that God had utterly forgotten them, compelled them more diligently to advert to what the former prophets had spoken. It is no doubt but that they carried with them both the prophecy of Isaiah and Jeremiah, so that the prophet Ezekiel is a commentary to these words of Isaiah, where he saith, "Thy dead, O Lord, shall live, with my body they shall arise." The prophet brings in this similitude of the dew, to answer unto that part of their fidelity, who can believe no further of God's promises than they are able to apprehend by natural judgment; as if he would say, Think ye this impossible, that God should give life unto you, and bring you to an estate of a commonwealth again, after that ye are dead, and as it were rased from the face of the earth? But why do you not consider what God worketh from year to year in the order of nature? Sometimes you see the face of the earth decked and beautified with herbs, flowers, grass, and fruits; again you see the same utterly taken away by storms, and the vehemence of the winter: what does God to replenish the earth again, and to restore the beauty thereof? He sends down his small and soft dew, the drops whereof, in their descending, are neither great nor visible, and yet thereby are the pores

and secret veins of the earth, which before by vehemence of frost and cold were shut up, opened again, and so does the earth produce again the like herbs, flowers, and fruits. Shall you then think, that the dew of God's heavenly grace will not be as effectual in you to whom he hath made his promise, as it is in the herbs and fruits which from year to year bud forth and decay? If you do so, the prophet would say your incredibility* is inexcusable; because you neither rightly weigh the power, nor the promise of your God.

The like similitude the apostle Paul uses against such as called the resurrection in doubt, because by natural judgment they could not apprehend that flesh once putrified, and dissolved as it were into other substance, should rise again, and return again to the same substance and nature: "O fool," saith he, "that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare corn, as it falleth, of wheat, or some other, but God giveth it a body as it pleaseth him, even to every seed his own body." In which words and sentence, the apostle sharply rebukes the gross ignorance of the Corinthians, who began to call in doubt the chief article of our faith, the resurrection of the flesh after it was once dissolved, because that natural judgment, as he said, reclaimed thereto.† He reproves, I say, their gross ignorance, because they might have seen and considered some proof and document thereof in the very order of nature; for albeit the wheat, or other corn, cast in the earth, appears to die or putrify, and so to be lost, yet we see that it is not perished, but that it fructifies according to God's will and ordinance.

Now, if the power of God be so manifest in raising up of the fruits of the earth, unto which no particular promise is made by God, what shall be his power and virtue in raising up our bodies, seeing that thereto he is bound by the solemn promise of Jesus Christ his Eternal Wisdom, and the Verity itself that cannot lie? Yea, seeing that the members must once communicate with the glory of the Head, how shall our bodies, which are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones, lie still for ever in corruption, seeing that our Head, Jesus Christ, is now exalted in his glory? Neither yet is this power and good-will of God to be restrained unto the last and general resurrection only,

* Unbelief. † Cried out against it.

but we ought to consider it in the marvellous preservation of his church, and in the raising up of the same from the very bottom of death, when by tyrants it has been oppressed from age to age.

Now, of the former words of the prophet, we have to gather this comfort; that if at any time we see the face of the church within this realm so defaced, as I think it shall be sooner than we look for—when we shall see, I say, virtue to be despised, vice to be maintained, the verity of God to be impugned, lies and men's inventions holden in authority—and finally, when we see the true religion of our God, and the zealous observers of the same, trodden under the feet of such as in their heart say, that "There is no God," (Psal. xiv.); let us then call to mind what have been the wondrous works of our God from the beginning—that it is his proper office to bring light out of darkness, order out of confusion, life out of death; and finally, that this is He that calleth things that are not, even as if they were, as before we have heard. And if in the day of our temptation, which in my judgment approaches fast, we are thus armed, if our incredulity cannot utterly be removed, yet shall it so be corrected, that damnable despair oppress us not. But now let us hear how the prophet proceeds:—

"Come, thou my people, enter within thy chamber, shut thy door after thee, hide thyself a very little while, until the indignation pass over."

Here the prophet brings in God amiably,* calling upon his people to come to himself, and to rest with him, until such time as the fury and sharp plagues should be executed upon the wicked and disobedient. It may appear at the first sight, that all these words of the prophet, in the person of God, calling the people unto rest, are spoken in vain; for we neither find chambers, nor rest, more prepared for the dearest children of God, so far as man's judgment can discern, than for the rebellious and disobedient; for such as fell not by the edge of the sword, or died not of pestilence, or by hunger, were either carried captives unto Babylon, or else departed afterwards into Egypt, so that none of Abraham's seed had either chamber or quiet place to remain in within the land of Canaan. For the resolution hereof, we must understand, That albeit the chambers whereunto God called his chosen be not

* Lovingly.

visible, yet notwithstanding they are certain, and offer unto God's children a quiet habitation in spirit, howsoever the flesh be travailed and tormented.

The chambers then are God's sure promises, unto which God's people are commanded to resort; yea, within which they are commanded to close themselves in the time of greatest adversity. The manner of speaking is borrowed from that judgment and foresight which God has printed in this our nature; for when men espy great tempests appearing to come, they will not willingly remain uncovered in the fields, but straightway they will draw them to their houses or holds, that they may escape the vehemence of the same; and if they fear any enemy pursues them, they will shut their doors, to the end that the enemy should not suddenly have entry.

After this manner God speaks to his people; as if he should say, The tempest that shall come upon this whole nation shall be so terrible, that nothing but extermination shall appear to come upon the whole body. But thou my people, that hearest my word, believest the same, and tremblest at the threatenings of my prophets, now, when the world does insolently resist—let such, I say, enter within the secret chamber of my promises, let them contain themselves quietly there; yea, let them shut the door upon them, and suffer not infidelity, the mortal enemy of my truth, and of my people that depend thereupon, to have free entry to trouble them, yea, further to murder, in my promise; and so shall they perceive that my indignation shall pass, and that such as depend upon me shall be saved.

Thus we may perceive the meaning of the prophet; whereof we have first to observe, that God acknowledges them for his people who are in the greatest affliction; yea, such as are reputed unworthy of men's presence are yet admitted within the secret chamber of God. Let no man think that flesh and blood can suddenly attain to that comfort; and therefore most expedient it is, that we be frequently exercised in meditation of the same. Easy it is, I grant, in time of prosperity, to say, and to think, that God is our God, and that we are his people; but when he has given us over into the hands of our enemies, and turned, as it were, his back unto us, then, I say, still to reclaim him to be our God, and to have this assurance, that we are his people, proceeds wholly from the Holy

Spirit of God, as it is the greatest victory of faith, which overcomes the world; for increase whereof, we ought continually to pray.

This doctrine we shall not think strange, if we consider how suddenly our spirits are carried away from our God, and from believing his promise. So soon as any great temptation apprehends us, then we begin to doubt if ever we believed God's promises, if God will fulfil them to us, if we abide in his favour, if he regards and looks upon the violence and injury that is done unto us; and a multitude of such cogitations which before lurked quietly in our corrupted hearts, burst violently forth when we are oppressed with any desperate calamity. Against which this is the remedy—once to apprehend, and still to retain God to be our God, and firmly to believe, that we are his people whom he loves, and will defend, not only in affliction, but even in the midst of death itself.

Again, Let us observe, That the judgments of our God never were, nor yet shall be so vehement upon the face of the earth, but that there has been, and shall be, some secret habitation prepared in the sanctuary of God, for some of his chosen, where they shall be preserved until the indignation pass by; and that God prepares a time, that they may glorify him again, before the face of the world, which once despised them. And this ought to be unto us no small comfort in these appearing dangers, namely, that we are surely persuaded, that how vehement soever the tempest shall be, it yet shall pass over, and some of us shall be preserved to glorify the name of our God, as is aforesaid.

Two vices lurk in this our nature: the one is, that we cannot tremble at God's threatenings, before the plagues apprehend us, albeit we see cause most just why his fierce wrath should burn as a devouring fire; the other is, that when calamities before pronounced, fall upon us, then we begin to sink down in despair, so that we never look for any comfortable end of the same.

To correct this our mortal infirmity, in time of quietness we ought to consider what is the justice of our God, and how odious sin is; and, above all, how odious idolatry is in His presence, who has forbidden it, and who has so severely punished it in all ages from the beginning: and in the time of our affliction we ought to consider, what

have been the wondrous works of our God, in the preservation of his church when it hath been in uttermost extremity. For never shall we find the church humbled under the hands of traitors, and cruelly tormented by them, but we shall find God's just vengeance fall upon the cruel persecutors, and his merciful deliverance shewed to the afflicted. And, in taking of this trial, we should not only call to mind the histories of ancient times, but also we should diligently mark what notable works God hath wrought, even in this our age, as well upon the one as upon the other. We ought not to think, that our God bears less love to his church this day, than what he has done from the beginning; for as our God in his own nature is immutable, so his love towards his elect remains always unchangeable. For as in Christ Jesus he hath chosen his church, before the beginning of all ages; so by him will he maintain and preserve the same unto the end. Yea, he will quiet the storms, and cause the earth to open her mouth, and receive the raging floods of violent waters, cast out by the dragon, to drown and carry away the woman, which is the spouse of Jesus Christ, unto whom God for his own name's sake will be the perpetual Protector. Rev. xii.

This saw that notable servant of Jesus Christ, Athanasius, who being exiled from Alexandria by that blasphemous apostate Julian the emperor, said unto his flock, who bitterly wept for his envious banishment, "Weep not, but be of good comfort, for this little cloud will suddenly vanish." He called both the emperor himself and his cruel tyranny a little cloud; and albeit there was small appearance of any deliverance to the church of God, or of any punishment to have apprehended the proud tyrants, when the man of God pronounced these words, yet shortly after God did give witness, that those words did not proceed from flesh nor blood, but from God's very Spirit. For not long after, being in warfare, Julian received a deadly wound, whether by his own hand, or by one of his own soldiers, the writers clearly conclude not; but casting his own blood against the heaven, he said, "At last thou hast overcome, thou Galilean:" so in despite he termed the Lord Jesus. And so perished that tyrant in his own iniquity; the storm ceased, and the church of God received new comfort.

Such shall be the end of all cruel persecutors, their

reign shall be short, their end miserable, and their name shall be left in execrations to God's people; and yet shall the church of God remain to God's glory, after all storms. But now shortly, let us come to the last point:

"For behold," saith the prophet, "the Lord will come out of his place, to visit the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth upon them; and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more hide her slain." (verse 21.) Because that the final end of the troubles of God's chosen shall not be, before the Lord Jesus shall return to restore all things to their full perfection.

The prophet brings forth the eternal God, as it were, from his own place and habitation, and therewith shows the cause of his coming to be, that he might take account of all such as have wrought wickedly; for that he means, where he saith, "He will visit the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth upon them." And lest any should think the wrong doers are so many, that they cannot be called to an account, he gives unto the earth as it were an office and charge, to bear witness against all those that have wrought wickedly, and chiefly against those that have shed innocent blood from the beginning; and saith, "That the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more hide her slain men."

If tyrants of the earth, and such as delight in the shedding of blood, should be persuaded that this sentence is true, they would not so furiously come to their own destruction; for what man can be so enraged, that he would willingly do even before the eyes of God that which might provoke his Majesty to anger, yea, provoke him to become his enemy for ever, if he understood how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God?

The cause then of this blind fury of the world is the ignorance of God, and that men think that God is but an idol; and that there is no knowledge above, that beholds their tyranny; nor yet justice that will, nor power that can, repress their impiety. But the Spirit of truth witnesses the contrary, affirming, that as the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and as his ears are ready to receive their sobbing and prayers, so is his visage angry against such as work iniquity; he hateth and holdeth in abomination every deceitful and blood-thirsty man, whereof he has given sufficient document from age to age, in

preserving the one, or at least in avenging their cause, and in punishing the other.

Where it is said, "That the Lord will come from his place, and that he will visit the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth upon them, and that the earth shall disclose her blood;" we have to consider, what most commonly has been, and what shall be, the condition of the church of God, namely, that it is not only hated, mocked, and despised, but that it is exposed as a prey unto the fury of the wicked; so that the blood of the children of God is spilt like unto water upon the face of the earth.

The understanding whereof, albeit it is unpleasant to the flesh, yet to us it is most profitable, lest that we, seeing the cruel treatment of God's servants, begin to forsake the spouse of Jesus Christ, because she is not so dealt with in this unthankful world, as the just and upright dealings of God's children do deserve. But contrariwise, for mercy they receive cruelty, for doing good to many, of all the reprobate they receive evil; and this is decreed in God's eternal counsel, that the members may follow the trace of the Head; to the end that God in his just judgment should finally condemn the wicked. For how should he punish the inhabitants of the earth, if their iniquity deserved it not? How should the earth disclose our blood, if it should not be unjustly spilt? We must then commit ourselves into the hands of our God, and lay down our necks; yea, and patiently suffer our blood to be shed, that the righteous Judge may require account, as most assuredly he will, of all the blood that hath been shed, from the blood of Abel the just, till the day that the earth shall disclose the same. I say, every one that sheds, or consents to shed the blood of God's children, shall be guilty of the whole; so that all the blood of God's children shall cry vengeance, not only in general, but also in particular, upon every one that has shed the blood of any that unjustly suffered.

And if any think it strange, that such as live this day can be guilty of the blood that was shed in the days of the apostles, let them consider, that the Verity itself pronounced, That all the blood that was shed from the days of Abel, unto the days of Zacharias, should come upon the unthankful generation that heard his doctrine and refused it. (Matt. xxiii.)

The reason is evident; for as there are two heads and captains that rule over the whole world, namely, Jesus Christ, the Prince of justice and peace, and satan, called the prince of the world; so there are but two armies that have continued battle from the beginning, and shall fight unto the end. The quarrel which the army of Jesus Christ sustains, and which the reprobate persecute, is the same, namely, The eternal truth of the eternal God, and the image of Jesus Christ printed in his elect—so that whosoever in any age persecutes any one member of Jesus Christ for his truth's sake, subscribes, as it were with his hand, to the persecution of all that have passed before him.

And this ought the tyrants of this age deeply to consider; for they shall be guilty, not only of the blood shed by themselves, but of all, as is said, that has been shed for the cause of Jesus Christ from the beginning of the world.

Let the faithful not be discouraged, although they be appointed as sheep to the slaughter-house; for He, for whose sake they suffer, shall not forget to avenge their cause. I am not ignorant that flesh and blood will think that kind of support too late; for we had rather be preserved still alive, than have our blood avenged after our death. And truly, if our felicity stood in this life, or if temporal death should bring unto us any damage, our desire in that behalf were not to be disallowed or condemned: but seeing that death is common to all, and that this temporal life is nothing but misery, and that death fully joins us with our God, and gives unto us the possession of our inheritance, why should we think it strange to leave this world, and go to our Head and sovereign Captain, Jesus Christ?

Lastly, We have to observe this manner of speaking, where the prophet saith, that "the earth shall disclose her blood:" in which words the prophet would accuse the cruelty of those that dare so unmercifully and violently force, from the breasts of the earth, the dearest children of God, and cruelly cut their throats in her bosom, who is by God appointed the common mother of mankind, so that she unwillingly is compelled to open her mouth and receive their blood.

If such tyranny were used against any woman, as violently to pull her infant from her breasts, cut the throat of

it in her own bosom, and compel her to receive the blood of her dear child in her own mouth, all nations would hold the act so abominable, that the like had never been done in the course of nature. No less wickedness commit they that shed the blood of God's children upon the face of their common mother, the earth, as I said before. But be of good courage, O little and despised flock of Christ Jesus! for He that seeth your grief, hath power to revenge it; he will not suffer one tear of yours to fall, but it shall be kept and reserved in his bottle, till the fulness thereof be poured down from heaven, upon those that caused you to weep and mourn. This your merciful God, I say, will not suffer your blood for ever to be covered with the earth; nay, the flaming fires that have licked up the blood of any of our brethren; the earth that has been defiled with it, I say, with the blood of God's children; for otherwise, to shed the blood of the cruel blood-shedders, is to purge the land from blood, and as it were to sanctify it: the earth, I say, shall purge herself of it, and show it before the face of God; yea, the beasts, fowls, and other creatures whatsoever, shall be compelled to render that which they have received, be it flesh, blood, or bones, that appertained to thy children, O Lord! which altogether thou shalt glorify, according to thy promise, made to us in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son; to whom, with thee, and the Holy Ghost, be honour, praise, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us now humble ourselves in the presence of our God, and from the bottom of our hearts let us desire him to assist us with the power of his Holy Spirit; that albeit, for our former negligence, God gives us over into the hands of others than such as rule in his fear; that yet he let us not forget his mercy, and the glorious name that hath been proclaimed amongst us; but that we may look through the dolorous storm of his present displeasure, and see as well what punishment he has appointed for the cruel tyrants, as what reward he has laid in store for such as continue in his fear to the end. That it would further please him to assist, that albeit we see his church so diminished, that it appears to be brought, as it were, to utter extermination, we may be assured, that in our God there is great power and will, to increase the number of his chosen, until they are enlarged to the uttermost parts of the earth. Give us, O Lord! hearts to visit thee in time

of affliction; and albeit we see no end of our dolours, yet our faith and hope may conduct us to the assured hope of that joyful resurrection, in which we shall possess the fruit of that for which we now labour. In the mean time, grant unto us, O Lord! to repose ourselves in the sanctuary of thy promise, that in thee we may find comfort, till this thy great indignation, begun amongst us, may pass over, and thou thyself appear to the comfort of thine afflicted, and to the terror of thine and our enemies.

Let us pray with heart and mouth,

Almighty God, and merciful Father, &c. Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit; for the terrible roaring of guns,* and the noise of armour, do so pierce my heart, that my soul thirsteth to depart.

The last day of August, 1565, *at four of the clock in the afternoon, written indigestedly, but yet truly so far as memory would serve, of those things that in public I spake on Sunday, August* 19; *for which I was discharged*† *to preach for a time.*

Be merciful to thy flock, O Lord! and at thy good pleasure put an end to my misery.

JOHN KNOX.

* The castle of Edinburgh was shooting against the exiled for Christ Jesus' sake.

† Forbidden.

A LETTER

TO

THE PEOPLE OF EDINBURGH,

By John Knox.*

To his loving Brethren, whom God once gloriously gathered in the church of Edinburgh, and now are dispersed for the trial of our faith, &c.

The troubles of the just shall shortly come to an end, to the glory of God, and to their eternal comfort. Beloved brethren in the Lord Jesus, partakers now of his afflictions, if the inability of body would suffer, I would write a long letter; but being in that state that I may not write with my own hand two lines, I must abide the good leisure of God, and desire you to have me excused, that I have not sooner visited you in this your dolorous persecution. When I call to mind the fearful threatenings of God that have been oftentimes thundered out into your ears, and do consider these present days, in the midst of my dolour, I praise my God, that satan hath not gotten the full victory, as he pretended. For this separation, which now is made to the grief of many hearts, is yet a severe document, that the word of God hath not lost the whole strength in you: but that God, working thereby, hath pulled you forth from the midst of the wicked, lest that you should be with them condemned, who now most manifestly rebel both against God and man.

Of one thing I must put you in mind, and I pray God that you may fruitfully remember it, That the word of God preached by the mouth of man, is not a vain sound, and words spoken without a purpose; but is the summoning of God himself, forewarning men before the judgment come. Ye have heard it plainly spoken, That we would to Egypt again, in despite of Jeremiah, and all admonitions; which threatening for that time was not only mocked, but also boldly spoken against. But whether this day declareth the truth of that and other threatenings, let the very blind world judge: for what can be to return to Egypt, if to join hands with idolaters be not? Yea, to erect an authority, by God justly condemned, without order, both against God and man? Such men, when they

* This letter was written by Knox during his residence at St. Andrew's, a short time previously to his decease.

were spoken unto, and were plainly admonished of their appearing defection, could not abide to be called proud contemners of God; who now spare not every moment to blaspheme God, and by their wicked works plainly deny, that there is a God who makes difference betwixt vice and virtue.

Rejoice therefore, and praise God's mercies, who hath called you from the company of such: and continue constant in that, which God of his mercy hath wrought in you, namely, a fear to remain in the faction of the wicked; which fear I pray God may daily increase in your hearts. I know the assaults that you shall suffer are sore and hard to be gainstood;* and therefore be you fervent in prayer, that ye repent not that God hath chosen you to suffer affliction with his Son Jesus Christ. Hard it is, I say, to gainstand† flesh and blood, and whatsoever is most precious in this life only, in hope of that kingdom promised; and yet only they that continue to the end shall stand in assurance before the Lord Jesus, in that general day, when virtue shall receive a just reward, and vice, with the workers of impiety, shall suffer wrath and vengeance without end.

Be not ye slandered at the multitude of them that have joined hands with impiety: "For if they had been of us, (as St. John saith) they had remained with us." But now this their defection doth plainly declare, that when they were with us, they were but as corrupted humours within the body, which behoved to be expelled forth, before the body could convalesce, and come to perfection again. Lament their fall, but follow not their ways; for howsoever they prosper in their attempt, the end thereof shall be their destruction temporal and eternal, unless speedy repentance prevent God's judgments; which to wish is godly, but to believe is foolish presumption, as oftentimes ye have heard.

Look not for final victory before that the strength and pride of the flesh be beaten down, neither be ye discouraged, albeit that iniquity prosper before the world; for the time of their felicity, which troubleth you for the present, shall be short: join not with them therefore, as ye will avoid plagues present, and condemnation eternal. Be faithful and loving one to another: let bitterness and suspicion be far out of your hearts: and let every one watch for the preservation of another, without grudging or murmuring; being assured, that as God hath appointed you

* Withstood. † Withstand.

to suffer affliction for righteousness' sake, so hath he appointed you to possess a kingdom, wherein neither satan, sin, nor death, shall have power to molest you. Rejoice in the Lord, that he hath counted you worthy to suffer for his name's sake. Pray for me, brethren, that I may fight my battle lawfully to the end. The Lord Jesus preserve you now and ever. Amen.

At St. Andrew's, the 17th of July, 1571.

Your brother to power in Christ Jesus,

JOHN KNOX.

If I might write, I would exhort you to remember, That "by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven."

A GODLY PRAYER,

Inserted at the conclusion of the printed copies of the Letter to the Faithful in London, Newcastle, and Berwick.

AH Lord, most strong and mighty God, who destroyest the counsels of the ungodly, and riddest away the tyrants of this world out of the earth at thy pleasure; so that no counsel or force can resist thine eternal counsel and everlasting determination. We thy poor creatures and humble servants, do most earnestly desire thee, for the love that thou hast to thy well beloved and only begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that thou wilt look upon thy cause, for it is time, O Lord; and bring to nought all those things that are or shall be appointed, determined, and fully agreed against thee and thy holy word. Let not the enemies of thy truth too miserably oppress thy word, and thy servants which seek thy glory, tender the advancement of thy pure religion, and above all things wish in their hearts that thy holy name alone may be glorified among all nations. Give unto the mouth of thy people truth and wisdom which no man may resist. And although we have most justly deserved this plague and famine of thy word, yet, upon our true repentance, grant, we beseech thee, we may be thereof released. And here we promise, before thy divine majesty, better to use thy gifts than we have done, and more straightly to order our lives, according to thy holy will and pleasure; and we will sing perpetual praises to thy most blessed name, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXTRACTS

FROM

THE COPY OF THE REASONING

BETWIXT

THE ABBOT OF CROSSRAGUEL AND JOHN KNOX,

CONCERNING THE MASS,

In Maybole, 1562.

Towards the summer of 1562, the Romish ecclesiastics in Scotland thought it necessary to declare greater readiness to dispute publicly in defence of their tenets, than they had for some time manifested.

Quintin Kennedy, uncle of the earl of Cassilis, and abbot of Crossraguel in Ayrshire, came forward as the champion of their church. He was more respectable, both for his talents and his conduct, than most of his order, and had written some polemical pieces. Among them was "A compendious tractive, shewing the nearest and only way to establish the conscience of a christian man." The method he pointed out was, implicit faith in the decrees of the church of Rome, and the dictates of its ministers!

In August, 1562, the abbot declared in the chapel of Kirk Oswald, that he was ready to defend the doctrine of the mass and other Romish tenets. In consequence of this, some messages and letters passed between the abbot and Knox, who was then in the vicinity, which ended in an appointment to meet on the 28th September in the house of the provost of Maybole. When the day arrived, as many were present as the house could contain, and notaries were appointed to take down a correct account of what passed. Knox commenced with public prayer, to which the abbot objected, but when the Reformer had concluded, he exclaimed, "By my faith it is well said." The disputation began with the doctrine concerning the sacrifice of the mass, a subject to which the abbot had given particular attention. This he defined to be "the sacrifice and oblation of the Lord's body and blood, given and offered by him in the Last Supper;" to confirm his view he urged the oblation of bread and wine by Melchizedec. (Gen. xiv. Heb. vii.) Upon this point Knox and the abbot disputed for three days, the latter endeavouring, without success, to prove his position. On the third day, the abbot, being indisposed, rose up, and put into the hands of the Reformer a book, to which he referred for further arguments upon the subject. By this time the noblemen and gentlemen present were tired of the tedious manner in which the disputation had been conducted, and being unable to procure sufficient entertainment in Maybole for themselves and their retinue, they resolved to separate. Knox wished to proceed to Ayr, and continue the conference, but the abbot declined this, and said he would prefer to come to Edinburgh, if he could obtain permission. Knox applied to the privy council, but the abbot died in 1564, and does not seem to have wished to resume the subject.

Knox published, in the year 1563, an account of the disputation, in consequence of the abbot and his friends asserting that they had the advantage. It was given from the records of the notaries, Knox merely adding a prologue and a few notes. Only one original copy of this tract is known to exist at present, from which a small impression was printed a few years since for the gratification of the curious. The whole would hardly interest the reader on account of the tedious and diffuse manner in which the abbot endeavoured to support his argument respecting Melchizedec, but the prologue or preface, with Knox's two writings in answer to the abbot's first statement and concluding argument, are valuable, and are here reprinted. Dr. M'Crie has given a full and interesting account of this disputation in his life of Knox, (vol. ii. p. 59—73.)

THE PROLOGUE.*

John Knox unto the reader wisheth grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Spirit of righteous judgment.

After that the prophet Isaiah in great vehemency had rebuked the vanity of idols and idolaters, as appears in the fortieth and forty-first chapters of his prophecy, at last he breaks forth in these words; "Let them bring forth their gods, that they may show unto us things that are to come, or let them declare unto us things that have been done before," &c. Show things that are to come, that we may understand you to be gods, let you do either good or evil, that we may declare it. By which words, the prophet, as it were in mockery, provokes idolaters, and the idols, to produce for themselves some evident testimonies, by which men might be assured that in them was power, and that their religion had the approbation of God, which when they could not do, he is bold to pronounce this sentence: "Behold, ye are of nothing, and your making is of nothing, abomination hath chosen you." (Isa. xli.) In which words the prophet condemns both the idols and the idolaters. The idols, because they can declare nothing to prove any power or virtue to be in them, why they should be worshipped as gods. And the idolaters, because from God's mouth they could bring no assurance of their adulterated and usurped religion.

If this reasoning of the prophet had sufficient strength, in his age, to show the vanity of the idols, and the phrenetic foolishness of such as worshipped them; then may the godly, this day, most assuredly conclude against the

* Knox here exposes, in an able and popular manner, the gross absurdities which necessarily result from the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, which asserts that the wafer given in the sacrament is actually and really changed into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, including also "his soul and divinity," as was declared by the Council of Trent, Sess. xiv. cap. 3.

great idol presented by the papists to be worshipped in their mass, and against the patrons of the same, that it and they are vain, foolish, odious, and abominable before God. It, because it hath more makers than ever had the idols amongst the Gentiles, and yet hath no greater power than they had, albeit it hath been worshipped as God himself. And they, because they worshipped their own imagination, and the workmanship of their own hands, without any assurance of God or of his word. If any think that I speak more liberally than I am able to prove, let him consider what makers the idols of the Gentiles had, and what makers the god of bread* hath; and then let the power of both be compared, and let me be rebuked if I speak not the truth.

The prophet, in speaking of their vanities, makes these complaints. "The earth bringeth forth the tree, it groweth by moisture, and natural wetness; it is cut down by the hand of the hewer. A part thereof is burnt, a part spent in uses necessary to man, another part chosen to be made an idol. This is formed to the likeness of man or woman, and then set up and worshipped as a god." All these, and some more, shall we find to assist and concur in making this great god of bread. The wheat is sown and nourished in the earth; rain, dew, and heat bring it to maturity. The reaper or shearer cuts it down; the cart or sledge, drawn by horse or some other beast, draws it to the barn or to the barn-yard. The thresher or the foot of the ox treads it out; the fan delivers it from the chaff; the miller and the mill-stones, by the help of wind or water, makes it to be meal. The smith makes the irons, that give to that god his length and breadth, likeness and form. The fine substance of that god is neither wood, gold, nor silver, but water and meal, made in manner of a drammock! † And then must the workmen take good heed to their hand. For if the fire be too hot, that god's skin must be burnt. If the irons be evil dight, his face will be blacked. If, in making the roundness, the ring be broken, then must another of his fellows receive that honour to be made a god, and the crased or cracked miserable cake, that once was in hope to be made a god, must be given to a baby to play withal! And yet is not

* The consecrated host, or bread of the Romish Sacrament of the altar.

† Flat cake.

all the danger past; for if there be not an anointed priest to play his part aright, all the former artificers have lost their labour; for without him that god cannot be made! Yea, if he have not intention to consecrate, the fashioned god remaineth bread, and so the blind people commit idolatry.

These are the artificers and workmen that travail in making of this god; I think as many in number as the prophet recites in making of the idols! And if the power of both shall be compared, I think they shall be found in all things equal, except that the god of bread is subject unto more dangers than were the idols of the Gentiles. Men made them; men make it. They were deaf and dumb; it cannot speak, hear, nor see. Briefly, in infirmity they wholly agree, except that, as I have said, the poor god of bread is most miserable of all other idols. For according to their matter whereof they are made, they will remain without corruption many years; but within one year that god will putrify, and then he must be burnt. They can abide the vehemency of wind, frost, rain, or snow; but the wind will blow that god to the sea; the rain or the snow will make it dough again; yea, which is most of all to be feared, that god is a prey, if he be not well kept, to rats and mice, for they will desire no better dinner than white round gods enough! But O what then becomes of Christ's natural body? By miracle it flies to the heaven again, if the papists teach truly; for how soon soever the mouse takes hold, so soon flies Christ away, and lets her gnaw the bread! A bold and puissant mouse, but a feeble and miserable god! Yet I would ask a question. Whether hath the priest or the mouse greater power? By his words it is made a god, by her teeth it ceases to be a god! Let them advise and then answer.

If any think that I ought not to mock that which the world has so long holden, and great princes still hold, in so great veneration, I answer, that not only I, but also all godly, ought not only to mock, but also to curse and detest, whatsoever is not God, and yet usurps the name, power, and honour of God. And also that we ought both to mock, gainsay, and abhor, all religion obtruded to the people, without assurance of God and his word; having neither respect to antiquity, to multitude, to authority, nor estimation of them that maintain the same. The idols of the Gentiles were more ancient than is the idol of the

mass. Their worshippers, maintainers, and patrons were more in multitude, greater in authority, and more excellent before the world, than ever were any that bowed to that idol. And yet the prophet Isaiah feared not to mock and jest them, yea, sharply to rebuke them, in these words, "They are thrown backward with shame, they shall be ashamed, whosoever trusteth in a graven image, and that say to the molten image, Ye are our gods. All the makers of graven images are vain, their pleasing things shall not profit them. For they themselves are witnesses to their idols, that they neither see nor understand any thing; and therefore they shall be ashamed. Who then," saith he, "shall forge a god? or a molten image that profiteth nothing? Behold all those that are of the fellowship thereof shall be confounded; for the workmen themselves are men; let them all be gathered together and stand up; yet they shall fear and be confounded together." And when he has fully painted forth their vanity, he concludes, "They have not understood; for God hath shut up their eyes, that they cannot see; and hearts, that they cannot understand; none considers in his heart, I have burnt half of it even in the fire, and have baken bread also upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination, shall I bow to the stock of a tree?" &c. Thus, I say, we see how the prophet triumphed against the idolaters, in mocking of their madness, and painted their vanity. Who then can justly be offended against me, or any other, albeit by all means possible we let the blind world see the vanity of that idol, considering that by it, the glory of God hath been more obscured, than ever it was by any idol in the earth. For to none were ever absolutely given the name, nature, power, and honour of God, but to that idol alone.

If any think that the scriptures of God give unto them authority, either to believe Christ's natural body to be there, after the words of consecration, as they call them; either yet to believe that Christ Jesus, in his last supper, offered unto God his Father, his body and blood, under the forms of bread and wine, he is miserably deceived; for the scripture makes no mention of conversion or transubstantiation of bread in Christ's natural body, but witnesses that bread remains bread. Yea, even when the faithful receive the same, as the apostle affirms in these words; "The bread that we break, is it not the communion

of Christ's body? The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? We, many, are one bread, and one body, because we are all partakers of one bread." (1 Cor. x.) And afterwards he says, "As oft as ye shall eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, ye show the Lord's death till he come." Let, therefore, a man try himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, &c. (1 Cor. xi.) By these words we may clearly understand what judgment the apostle had of the substance of the sacrament, even in the very action of the same. And as touching that foolish opinion, that Christ Jesus offered his body to God his Father, under the forms of bread and wine, &c. which the papists make the ground of their mass, what suffrage soever it hath by man, of God and of his word it hath none.

The scripture witnesses that God the Father gave his Son unto the world, that the world might be saved by him; and that Jesus Christ offered himself once unto God, for the destruction of sin, and to take away the sins of many; (John iii. Heb. ix. x.) but that ever he offered himself under the forms of bread and wine, as the papists allege, the Holy Ghost nowhere makes mention. Therefore the faithful may reject it as the dream and invention of man, and also are bound to abhor and detest it as a doctrine brought in by satan, to deceive such as delight not in the verity of God, to whose mouth and voice are the faithful only bound.

Master Quintin, that great patron of the mass, in this conference, adduces for the probation of his affirmative—Christ Jesus did offer, saith he, unto God his Father, in his last supper, his body and blood, under the forms of bread and wine, &c. For the probation hereof, I say, he adduces the fact of Melchizedec, who brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, &c. (Gen. xiv.) But how soon he is ashamed thereof, and how unable he is to prove that which he alleges to be most easy to be proved, the diligent reader may espy. For perceiving himself unable ever to prove, that either Christ Jesus or Melchizedec made any such oblation as he and the fond papists imagine, he runs straight to his fortress and shameless shift. O, saith master Quintin, I have hurt my own cause, I was carried away with zeal, &c. It pertains not unto me to prove any thing, but to defend my articles as they are written.

If master Quintin and his collaterals will resolve me a doubt, then will I give my judgment whether he ought to prove, or to defend only. My doubt is this, Whether are master Quintin's articles necessary to be believed to salvation, or are they such as, without danger of damnation, we may doubt of them? If we may doubt of them, and not offend God, then assuredly I think that master Quintin may hold them for truth, till the falsehood of them be manifestly declared. But if he says they are such as we are bound to believe as a truth of God, and a doctrine necessary to salvation, then is master Quintin bound to show to us that God hath pronounced them, and not man. Which if he be not able to do, and that in plain and expressed words, then must we reject them as deceivable and false, according as we are taught by our master Christ Jesus, saying, "My sheep hear my voice, but a stranger they will not hear." John x.

If master Quintin will not be reputed a false prophet, and one that teaches lies in the name of God, and so exposes himself to God's hot displeasure, he may propose no doctrine to the church of God, the assurance whereof he brings not from the mouth of God. If master Quintin were brawling in the schools or bragging of knowledge amongst the philosophers, I would patiently abide that he should affirm as many paradoxes as pleased him. But, in the church of God, to affirm that God hath spoken when God hath not spoken; or done that which he is not able to prove by God's plain word that He hath done—so to do, I say, is altogether intolerable. And therefore, let him search the scriptures for the probation of his affirmative, or else I will cry also as loud as I can, that he has lost his cause, and is convicted a manifest liar, in that he hath affirmed Jesus to have done that which no scripture doth witness that He hath done. Let all men therefore, who will not follow lies, detest the mass, till it find a ground within the book of God, as I am assured it never shall. And that shall the reader more easily perceive by this conference that follows:—

Read and then judge.

The answer of John Knox to the Abbot's Oration, given in writing by the Abbot before the disputation.

JOHN KNOX.

WHENSOEVER it pleases God, of his great mercy, to show the light and to blow the trumpet of his true word unto the blind and unthankful world, after darkness and long silence, it hath the strength to move and waken, not only the chosen, but also the reprobate, and in divers manners. For the one it wakeneth from ignorance, error, superstition, vanity, and horrible corruption, to walk before their God in knowledge, verity, true serving of his Majesty, and in purity of life. But the others it wakeneth from their former sloth, and yet to their further condemnation. For such as in the time of darkness did live as men without God, at the sound of the trumpet calling them to repentance, add and join to their former corruption, blaspheming against God and against his eternal verity. For perceiving that the light discovers their turpitude, and that the trumpet will not suffer them to sleep, as they did before, without open reproach; they shame not to call light, darkness, and darkness, light; good, evil, and evil, good. (Isa. v.) And to bring that to pass, namely, that the light shine no more, the whole band of such as oppose themselves to the verity of God so earnestly travail, that sluggards and effeminate men become active and strong soldiers to the devil. The examples hereof are so common in scripture that they need no long rehearsal. For what was the state of the false prophets and priests in the days of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Michaiah, and the rest of the true prophets of God?

What care they, who by ordinary succession ought to have taught the people of God, took over their charges, the complaints and attestations of the true prophets used against them do witness. In which they call them dumb dogs, blind watchmen, such as regarded nothing but ambition, riotous cheer, and lusts of the flesh. Pastors that fed not the flock, but fed themselves. Finally, they term them men, from the most to the least, given to avarice; apostates that had left God, his laws, statutes, and ordinances, and had laid themselves down to sleep in the midst

of corruption, out of which they could not be wakened. (Isa. lvi. Ezek. xxxiv. Jer. vi.) But yet how vigilant and active they were to resist the true prophets, and the doctrine offered by them, the scripture likewise testifies. For then was Isaiah, and such as adhered to his doctrine, held as monsters in the eyes of the proud priests, and of the multitude. Then was Jeremiah accused of treason, cast into prison, and condemned to death. Then was Michaiah openly stricken upon the mouth; (Isa. viii. Jer. xxxviii. 1 Kings xxii.) and briefly, then did none of the true prophets of God escape the hatred and cruel persecution of those that claimed the title and authority to rule in the church.

The same may be seen in the days of Jesus Christ; for how negligent and careless the whole Levitical order, a few excepted, were, these words of our Master Jesus Christ do witness: "Wo be unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven before men; ye yourselves do not enter, and such as would enter, ye suffer not." (Matt. xxiii.) But when the trumpet began to blow in the mouth of John the Baptist; and when Jesus Christ began to preach and to make more disciples than John did; when John called them a progeny of vipers, and Jesus Christ termed them blind guides, how careful the whole rabble then were is easy to be perceived. For then were ambassadors sent to John to know by what authority he made such innovation among the people and in the religion of God. (Matt. xv.) Then was Christ Jesus tempted with sharp and subtle questions; then was he accused for breaking of the traditions of the ancients; then was he called Beelzebub; (Matt. xvii.) and in the end he was procured to be hanged betwixt two thieves. And by whose diligence was all this brought to pass? Was it not by them who before had abused the law, blinded the people, deceived the simple, and under the title and name of God, had set up the devil and all abomination to reign over men. For in place of God's true worshipping they had erected a market and filthy merchandize in the temple of God. (John ii.) The ejection whereof did so enrage these dumb dogs, that with one accord they began to bark against Jesus Christ, and his most wholesome doctrine; and that because the zeal of that great God, their belly, did altogether consume and eat them up.

These things we know to be most true, and therefore we ought not to wonder albeit the true word of God retains its own nature, and that the selfsame thing befall now in our days that heretofore hath been fully performed. As for myself, I nothing doubt but the great perturbation, controversy, and debate lately stirred up in all christian realms, for the cause of religion, is the cause that my lord abbot has been of late days troubled with unaccustomed labours.* For if the superstition, idolatry, pride, vainglory, ambition, unjust possessions, superfluous rents and filthy living, used and maintained heretofore by such as claim the name and authority of the church, had not been openly rebuked, and a part thereof, in despite of satan, suppressed; it may be thought that my lord in this his impotent age, could have contented himself with the selfsame ease and quietness that in his younger age, and better ability, he enjoyed. But now the trumpet soundeth damnation to all negligent pastors, and therefore is my lord afraid; and therefore, to discharge his conscience, he will take the pains to instruct his flock, and to warn them to beware of false teachers. I will interpret all to the best part. If my lord's eye be single, his work is good; but if the light that appeareth to be in him, and in his sect, be nothing but darkness, how great shall the darkness be! (Matt. vi.) My lord is a clerk,† and needeth no interpreter of such places of scripture. But for the simple I say—that rightly to teach the flock of Jesus Christ requires right institution in Christ's own doctrine; or else a zeal without knowledge is nothing but the cause of further blindness. Yea, if the blind lead the blind, the ignorant idolater taking upon him to teach the ignorant people of long time brought up in idolatry, neither of them both can escape condemnation so long as they follow that train; and therefore it will nothing unburden my lord's conscience, albeit that after his negligence and long silence, he begin to cry to such as he terms his flock, "Beware of false prophets;" for it may be that himself is one of that number; yea, perchance, the falsest that they have heard these hundred years. For if he be a false prophet that teaches men to follow strange gods; that prophesies a lie in the name of the Lord, and speaks to

* The abbot complained of the unusual trouble of late occasioned him by heretics.

† A learned man.

the people the divination and deceit of his own heart; that causes the people to err, and leave the old paths, and to walk in the path of the way that is not trodden; that constantly says to them that provoke God to anger, "The Lord hath spoken it, ye shall have peace; and to all that walk after the lusts of their own hearts, there shall no evil chance unto you," &c. (Jer. xxiii.) If, finally, they are false prophets that are avaricious and study for advantage, that sew pillows under the armholes of wicked men, and lay sinners to sleep, and promise life to them to whom they ought not to promise it. (Ezek. xiii.) If these be false prophets (I say) as the scripture affirms them to be, then stands my lord abbot in a wondrous perplexity, and such as believe him are in no less danger.

For God hath never pronounced such articles as my lord calls wholesome doctrine; the chief of them, namely, the mass, purgatory, praying to saints, erecting of images, and such others, have no assurance of God's word, but are the mere dreams, statutes, and inventions of men, as their particular examination, if my lord pleases to abide the trial, will more plainly witness. And therefore it is no sufficient assurance to the conscience of the auditor, that my lord burden his conscience in the presence of God, that his articles are godly, necessary, and expedient to be believed. For so have ever the false prophets done, when they and their doctrines were impugned. Did not the prophets and priests of Baal affirm their doctrine and religion to be godly, against the prophet Elias? (1 Kings xviii.) They did not only burden their conscience, but also offered themselves to suffer trial, God himself being judge, before the king and before the whole people. The selfsame thing did the false prophets against Michaiah and Jeremiah. And therefore, yet again I say, my lord's conscience, (if a blind zeal be worthy of the name of conscience,) will neither save himself nor others, because it is not grounded upon God, his revealed will or promise. If my lord thinks that the holy catholic church is sufficient assurance for his conscience, let him understand that the false prophets had the same buckler against Jeremiah; (Jer. vii.) for they cried, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord:" but as he with one stroke did burst their buckler asunder, saying, "Put not your trust in lying words;" so say we, that how catholic (that is universal) or even holy their church

hath been, they never are able to prove it, neither in life, making of laws, nor in soundness of doctrine, as in my answer given by mouth I have more plainly shown. It pleases my lord to term us wicked and deceitful preachers, who go about, not knowing wherefrom we come, nor by what order. And further, he fears not to pronounce our doctrine false, wicked, and ungodly; for of us and our doctrine it is plain that my lord meant and meaneth.

I answer, that as, by God's word, we accuse the whole mass of man's nature of corruption and wickedness; so do we not flatter ourselves, but willingly confess ourselves to be so subject to corruption and natural wickedness, that the good which we would do, we do it not; but the evil that we hate, that we do. Yea, we do not deny but that in our lives and outward conversation there are many things both worthy of reformation and reprehension. But yet if our lives shall be compared with the lives of them that accuse us, be it in general or be it in particular, we doubt not to be justified, both before God and man. For how many ministers this day within Scotland, is my lord abbot (joining with him the whole rabble of the horned bishops) able to convict to be adulterers, fornicators, drunkards, blood-shedders, oppressors of the poor widow, fatherless, or stranger, or yet do idly live upon the sweat of other men's brows. And how many of them, from the highest to the lowest, are able to abide an assize of the forenamed crimes? And yet shall we be called by them wicked and deceitful preachers, even as if the strongest and most common harlot that ever was known in the brothel, should slander and revile an honest and modest matron. But in somewhat must the sons resemble their father.

The devil, as he is perpetual enemy to truth and to an honest life, so is he a liar and accuser of the brethren; and therefore, albeit such as serve him in idolatry and all filthiness of life cast forth against us their venom and lies; with testimony of a good conscience, we refer vengeance to him to whom it appertaineth; neither yet would we have once opened our mouths for the defence of our own innocency, for, God be praised, even before the world it will utter itself, were it not that in slandering our lives they go about to deface the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, whereof it hath pleased his mercy to make us ministers. And in that case, let them be assured, that the

lies which without shame or assurance, they causelessly vomit out against us; with shame and double confusion they shall justly receive them again in their own bosoms. If my lord abbot allege that he accuses not our lives and external conversation, but our doctrine, which he terms false, wicked, and ungodly, we answer, That doth more grieve us than the slandering of our lives, but we doubt nothing but that He who made his favourable promise to afflicted Jerusalem, in these words, "All instruments that are prepared against thee shall not prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shall rightly convict and condemn of impiety." (Is. liv.) —We doubt not, I say, but the same God will, in this our age, confound the tongues that oppose themselves to his eternal verity, which is the ground and assurance of our doctrine. And therefore, we nothing fear to say that my lord, in the end, shall speed no better, if he continue in that his irreverent railing, than such as heretofore have blasphemed Jesus Christ and his eternal verity. To the which albeit for the present they will not be subject, and that because our persons and presence, whom God maketh ministers of the same, are contemptible and despised, yet in the end they shall feel, that in rebelling against our admonitions they were rebellious to the mouth of God; and in defacing us they have despised the eternal Son of God, who of his mercy hath sent us to rebuke their impiety, and to reduce to knowledge and unto the true pastor again, such as through blind ignorance have followed the inventions and dreams of men, and have sought justice, remission of sins, and reconciliation with God, by other means than by Jesus Christ, and by true faith in his blood.

But of this point I know my lord most doubts, namely, Whether God hath sent us or not? For my lord says we go about, not knowing wherefrom we come, nor by what order. We answer, that in our consciences we know, and he himself will bear us record, that we are not sent by that Roman antichrist whom he calls the pope, nor yet from his carnal cardinals, nor dumb bishops. And thereof we rejoice, being assured that as we are not sent by Christ's manifest enemy in the earth, so are we sent by Jesus Christ himself, and that by such order as God hath ever kept from the beginning, when public corruption entered into the church, by sloth and impiety of such as of duty

ought to have fed the flock, and to have retained the people under obedience of God, as well in religion as in life and manners. The order of God, I say, hath been, in such public corruptions to raise up simple and obscure men, in the beginning of their vocation unknown to the world, to rebuke the manifest defection of the people from God, to convict the pastors of their former negligence, sloth, and idolatry, and to pronounce them unworthy of their offices. For so was Elias sent in the days of Ahab, Jeremiah in the time of corruption under Jehoiakin and Zedechias, Amos under Jeroboam, and the rest of the prophets, every one in their own time. (1 Kings xvii. Jer. xxxv. Amos ii.) And after the same order hath God raised up in these our days such men as my lord and his faction term heretics, schismatics, Zuinglians, Lutherans, Ecolampadians, and Calvinists.

They are now raised up to prove the pope to be antichrist; his whole glory in the earth to be altogether repugnant to the condition of Christ's true ministers;—the mass to be idolatry, and a bastard service of God, yea, more corrupted than ever was the sacrifice in the days of the prophets, when yet they affirmed them to be abominable before God; to prove purgatory to be nothing but a pick-purse; the defence of man's free will to do good and avoid evil, to be the condemned heresy of Pelagius;—the forbidding of marriage to any estate of men or women to be the doctrine of devils; and to prove the forbidding of meat for conscience sake to proceed of the same fountain; the erecting images in churches, and in public places of assemblies, to be against the expressed commandment of God; prayer to the dead and to saints, to be work done without faith, and therefore to be sin. Briefly, God hath raised up men, in these our days, so to discover the turpitude and filthiness of that Babylonian harlot, that her golden cup, in which her fornication was hid before, is now become abominable to all such as trust for the life everlasting. And they have further set so vehement a fire in the very ground of her glory, that is, in her usurped authority, that she and it are both likely to burn, to their uttermost confusion. My lord and his companions fear no such threatenings. They are but railing knaves that despitefully speak against their holy mother the church!

I have already said that the prophets, in their days, were even so rewarded of those that had the same title

and dignity that now our adversaries claim; and yet did they not escape the plagues pronounced, And in the same confidence we stand, rejoicing further, that howsoever the pope's creatures repine, storm, and rage, yet they that are of God, hear us, know the voice of Jesus Christ speaking in us his weak instruments, and do fly from that horrible harlot, and from her filthiness; which is to us a sufficient assurance that God hath sent us for the comfort of his chosen.

But my lord, perchance, requires miracles to prove our lawful vocation. For so doth Vinzet, procutor* for the papists. To both I answer, that a truth, by itself, without miracles, has sufficient strength to prove the lawful vocation of the teachers thereof; but miracles, destitute of truth, have efficacy to deceive, but never to bring to God. But this, by the grace of God, shall be more fully entreated in the answer to Vinzet's questions thereupon. And yet one word must I say, before I make end, to my lord and unto the rest of the pope's creatures; and it is this. If they will study to keep themselves in credit and estimation, let them never call our vocation in doubt; for we instantly will object to them, that from the most to the least, there is none amongst them lawfully called to serve within the church of God. But all commit simony, all are heretics, all receive the spirit of lies, and the leprosy of Gehazi; (2 Kings v.) and finally, being accused as to their first ordination, they neither can give grace nor benediction to the people of God. And this by their own law, I offer myself to prove as evidently as my lords bishops, abbots, priors, and the rest of that sect, are able to prove themselves called to ecclesiastical function, as they term it, by their father's bulls, and confirmation of the pope.

I wonder not a little that my lord should allege, that I was certified that he could not be present at Kirkoswald, the day that I first offered myself to resist his vain and blasphemous articles. I am able to prove that, by his promise, he had bound himself oftener than once to be present. And also that by famous gentlemen, on that same Sunday in the morning, he was required either to come and teach according to his promise, and so to suffer

* Or prolocutor. The individual referred to was Ninian Wingate, a Romish schoolmaster of Linlithgow, who at the instigation of some priests, had previously written to Knox upon the subjects in dispute between the papists and the reformed, particularly the call of ministers.

his doctrine to be tried in the hearing of such as he called his own flock; or else to come and hear doctrine, and with sobriety and gentleness to oppose at his pleasure. These two heads, I say, I am able to prove. But that I was certified that he could not be present, &c. I think it shall be as hard to prove, as to prove that Melchizedec made sacrifice of bread and wine unto God.* But my lord shall have liberty of me to allege in such cases what pleases him, so long as his allegation shall not prejudge the verity, nor give patrociny to† a lie in matters of religion. It is not of great importance whether I were certified or not that my lord could not be present, as he alleges. I presented myself at the day appointed; and that is some argument that I greatly feared not my lord's presence. The letters that have passed betwixt us, together with some answers that I deferred, shall be put in register before the disputation, that men may see the whole proceedings of both parties. And thus much by writing to my lord's first oration given us in writing.

The answer to my lord's last argument, proposed by him in writing, on the last day of disputation. The argument is this.

Master Quintin saith

Whatsoever opinion is conceived of the scriptures of Almighty God having no express testimony nor appearance of the Saviour,‡ is utterly to be refused, as says John Knox himself. But sure it is, that John Knox's own opinion conceived or contracted of the scripture, concerning the bringing forth of bread and wine by Melchizedec to refresh or gratify Abraham and his weary company, is not expressly contained in the scripture, nor has any appearance of the Saviour, therefore it follows well, that it is all utterly by his own judgment to be refused.

John Knox.

If I should grant unto you, my lord, your whole argument, I should but declare myself ignorant of the art, and

* Which the abbot made the principal ground of his arguments in support of the mass.

† Patronise, countenance.

‡ The real presence in the bread.

unmindful of my own affirmation; but yet you would have proved nothing of your intent. The chief question and controversy betwixt you and me, is not whether my interpretation of that place (which at your instance and request I gave) be true or not; but whether Melchizedec, the figure of Christ, did offer unto God bread and wine, which you have affirmed, and laid it to be the ground and cause why it behoved Christ Jesus to have made oblation of his body and blood, under the forms of bread and wine, in his Last Supper, both which I denied. So that it rests to you to prove that Melchizedec, the figure of Christ, did offer unto God bread and wine, &c.; and it appertains not unto me to prove my opinion or interpretation. For supposing that my opinion, conceived of that place, were to be rejected, (as you are never able to prove it to be,) yet is your affirmative never the better proved; for if you will conclude, It was not brought forth to refresh Abraham, (which yet is not proven,) therefore it was brought forth to be offered unto God, babes will mock you, and send you again to your logic.

But yet, my lord, with your leave I must come nearer you, and say, that the major or first part of your argument is false, and that you falsely allege upon me that which I never spake nor meant. Read the whole conference betwixt you and me, and you shall not find that I have simply affirmed that all opinion of man conceived of the scriptures is utterly to be rejected, unless the same be proved by the manifest word of God. For I am not ignorant that some interpretations are tolerable, yea, and may be to the edification of the church, although they do not fully express the mind of the Holy Ghost in that place. But I have affirmed, and yet affirm, that neither the authority of the church, the determination of the councils, nor the opinions of doctors, are to be received in matters of faith, and in the doctrine concerning our salvation, unless the same be proved by the express word of God. And therefore, my lord, with your leave, I must say, that either wilfully or else by some oversight, you have omitted both in the major and in the minor of your argument that which should have been the cause and assurance of your conclusion.

For thus you ought to have reasoned, "Whatsoever opinion is conceived of the scriptures of almighty God concerning faith and the doctrine of salvation, having no

express testimony of the same, is to be rejected. But so it is, that John Knox's own opinion concerning the bringing forth of bread and wine by Melchizedec is a matter concerning faith, and the doctrine of our salvation, yet it hath no testimony of God's expressed word, therefore it is to be rejected."

If in this manner you had reasoned, my lord, (as of necessity you must do, if you conclude any thing against me,) I would have immediately denied the second part of your argument, and have said, that to know or define what was done with the bread and wine brought out by Melchizedec is no article of our belief, neither yet is it a doctrine necessary to the salvation of man. For neither did Adam, Abel, Seth, Enos, Enoch, Methuselah, or Noah, believe any such thing; neither yet is there, since the days of Abraham, any commandment given by God, to believe such an article. Yea, further, in the whole scriptures there is no mention made what was done with that bread and wine, and therefore it can be no article of our belief, nor yet a doctrine concerning our salvation, and so your argument has broken its own neck. If I list, my lord, to sport a little with you, I might find some occasion in the second part of your argument. For where you affirm that my opinion concerning the bringing forth of the bread and wine, by Melchizedec, to refresh Abraham and his company is neither expressly contained in the word of God, neither yet hath appearance of the same, and therefore it is utterly to be rejected—now, my lord, give me leave to turn this part of your argument into your own bosom, if I can; and that so I may do, thus I reason.

The opinion conceived by my lord abbot, that the bread and wine brought forth by Melchizedec was offered unto God, is not expressly contained in God's scriptures, therefore it is utterly to be rejected. Beware, my lord, that you be not beaten with your own batoon;* for then must the mass, yea, the best part of the same, stand upon an unsure ground, that is to say, upon the opinion of man, and having no assurance of God's expressed word! But now, my lord, merriness set aside, I humbly require you by my pen, as I did by mouth, that you deeply consider with what conscience before God you dare affirm that doctrine to be wholesome, yea, and necessary to be

* Staff, weapon.

believed, whereof you are able to bring no proof out of the manifest word of God.

The second day of our conference and disputation, when I was constrained to answer your frivolous conjectures and vanities, your brags and boasts oftener blown out than once, were, that your probation should be so evident, that the stones should hear your probation and the dead walls should see the justness of your cause. I patiently did abide, (although perchance with the grief of some brethren,) these your wanton words, and thought within myself, The mountains are in labour, &c. But what is now produced and brought forth, the world may see! It may appear that you were hard beset, when to avoid the proof of your own affirmative you fled to impugn that which appertains nothing to the purpose. For as I was not bound to have shown unto you what I thought was done with the bread and wine brought forth by Melchizedec, so was I not bound to have defended my interpretation and judgment of that place.

But unto you it always appertains, and if ever we meet again upon that head it will be yet judged to appertain to you, to prove that Melchizedec did at that time offer bread and wine unto God, which I am well assured that you are never able to do, by any testimony of God's word. And therefore must I say, the mass standeth groundless. And the greatest patron thereof, for all his sicker* riding, hath once lost his stirrups, yea, is altogether set besides his saddle. And yet the common fame goeth, that you, my lord, your flatterers and collaterals, brag greatly of your victory obtained in disputation against John Knox; but I will not believe you to be so vain, unless I shall know the certainty written by your own hand.

Let all men now judge upon what ground the sacrifice of the mass standeth. The heavenly Father hath not planted within his scriptures such a doctrine. It followeth therefore, that it ought to be rooted out of all godly men's hearts.

* Sure, safe.

THANKSGIVING

FOR

DELIVERANCE, WITH PRAYERS.

"The parliament was to begin the 20th of July, 1560, and to be continued till the first of August; and therefore the lords made haste and diligence, that all things should be put in convenient order. But, before all things, the preachers exhorted them, for then in Edinburgh were the most part of the chief ministers of this realm, to be thankful unto God; and, next to provide that the ministers should be distributed, as the necessity of the country required. A day was appointed, when the whole nobility, and the greatest part of the congregation, assembled in St. Giles's church, in Edinburgh, where, after the sermon made for that purpose, public thanks were given unto God for his merciful deliverance, in form as followeth."—*Knox, History.*

O Eternal and everlasting God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath not only commanded us to pray, and promised to hear us, but also willest us to magnify thy mercies, and to glorify thy name, when thou showest thyself pitiful and favourable unto us; especially when thou deliverest us from desperate dangers: for so did thy servants, Abraham, David, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah; yea, the whole people of Israel omitted not the same, when thou, by thy mighty hand, didst confound their enemies, and didst deliver them from fear and danger of death intended. We ought not, nor can we forget, O Lord, in how miserable estate stood this poor country, and we, the just inhabitants of the same, not many days past; when idolatry was maintained; when cruel strangers did bear rule; when virgins were deflowered, matrons corrupted, men's wives violently and villainously oppressed, the blood of innocents shed without mercy; and finally, when the unjust commandments of proud tyrants were obeyed as law. Out of these miseries, O Lord, neither our wit, policy, nor strength could deliver us; yea, thou didst show to us how vain was the help of man, where thy blessing giveth not victory.

In these our anguishes, O Lord, we sobbed unto thee, we cried for thy help, and we proclaimed thy name, as thy troubled flock, persecuted for thy truth's sake. Mercifully

hast thou heard us, O Lord, mercifully, we say, because that neither in us, neither yet in our confederates, was there any cause, why thou shouldest have given unto us so joyful and sudden a deliverance: for none of us ceased to do wickedly, even in the midst of our greatest troubles; and yet hast thou looked upon us so pitifully, as though we had given unto thee most perfect obedience. For thou hast disappointed the counsels of the crafty; thou hast bridled the rage of the cruel; and thou hast, of thy mercy, set this our perishing realm at a reasonable liberty.

O thou Lord, that only givest all good gifts, give us hearts, with reverence and fear, to meditate on thy wondrous works, lately wrought in our eyes. Let not the remembrance of the same unthankfully slip from our wavering minds. We grant and acknowledge, O Lord, that whatsoever we have received shall fall into oblivion with us, and so turn to our condemnation, unless thou, by the power of thy Spirit, keep and retain us in recent and perpetual memory of the same. We beseech thee therefore, O Father of mercies! that as, of thy undeserved grace, thou hast partly removed our darkness, suppressed idolatry, and taken from above our heads the devouring sword of merciless strangers, that so it would please thee to proceed with us in this thy grace begun.

And albeit that in us there is nothing that may move thy Majesty to show us this favour, yet, for Christ Jesus, thy only well-beloved Son's sake, whose name we bear, and whose doctrine we profess, we beseech thee never to suffer us to forsake or deny this verity, which now we profess: but seeing that thou hast mercifully heard us, and hast caused thy verity to triumph in us, so we crave of thee continuance to the end, that thy godly name may be glorified in us thy creatures. And seeing that nothing is more odious in thy presence, O Lord, than ingratitude and violation of an oath and covenant made in thy name; and seeing thou hast made our confederates of England the instruments by whom we are now set at this liberty, and to whom, in thy name, we have promised mutual faith again; let us never fall to that unkindness, O Lord, that either we declare ourselves unthankful unto them, or profaners of thy holy name. Confound thou the counsel of those that go about to break that most godly league contracted in thy name, and retain thou us so firmly together, by the power of thy Holy Spirit, that satan may

have no power to set us again at variance or discord. Give us thy grace to live in that christian charity, which thy Son our Lord Jesus hath so earnestly commended to all the members of his body; that other nations, stirred up by our example, may set aside all ungodly war, contention, and strife, and study to live in tranquillity and peace, as becometh the sheep of thy pasture, and the people that daily look for our final deliverance, by the coming again of our Lord Jesus: to whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, be all honour, glory, and praise, now and ever. Amen.

EXTRACT FROM THE TESTAMENT

OF

JOHN KNOX.

Made about six months previously to his decease.

Lord Jesus, I commend my troubled spirit unto thy protection and defence, and thy troubled church to thy mercy. Because I have had to do with divers persons of the ministry, whereunto God of his mercy erected me* within this realm, my duty craves that I should now leave unto them a testimony of my mind.

And first, unto the papists and to the unthoughtful world I say, that although my life has been odious to them, and oftentimes they have sought my destruction, and the destruction of the church, which God of his mercy has planted within this realm, and has always preserved and kept the same from their cruel enterprises, yet to them I am compelled to say, that unless they speedily repent, my departing this life shall be to them the greatest calamity that ever yet has taken hold upon them. Some small appearance they may yet have in my life if they have grace to see; a dead man have I been almost these two years last past: and yet I would that they should fully consider what better state they and their affairs stand in than has been before, and they have heard long time threatened. But if they will not admit me for an admonisher, I give

* Raised me.

them over to the judgment of Him who knows the hearts of all, and will disclose the secrets thereof in due times. And thus far as to the papists.

To the faithful God, before his Son Jesus Christ, and before his holy angels, I protest, that God by my mouth, be I never so abject, has shown to you his truth in all simplicity. None have I corrupted, none have I defrauded, merchandize have I not made (to God's glory I write) of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, but according to the measure of the grace granted unto me, I have divided the sermon* of truth in just parts; beating down the pride of the proud in all that did declare their rebellion against God, according as God in his law gives to me that testimony; and raising up the consciences troubled with the knowledge of their own sins, by the declaring of Jesus Christ, the strength† of his death, and the mighty operation of his resurrection. In the hearts of the faithful, I say, I have a testimony of this at this day in my conscience before God, howsoever the world rage.

Be constant, therefore, in the doctrine that ye once publicly have professed. Let not slanderous‡ days draw you away from Jesus Christ. Neither let the prosperity of the wicked move you to follow it or them; for however God appears to neglect his own for a season, yet he remains a just judge who neither can nor will justify the wicked. I am not ignorant that many would that I should enter into particular determination of the present troubles, to whom I plainly and simply answer, that as I never exceeded the bounds of God's scriptures, so will I not now do, by God's grace. . . . . I know on my death the rumours shall be strange, but, beloved in the Lord Jesus, be ye not troubled above measure. But yet again I say, remain constant in the truth, and He who of his mercy sent me, conducted me, and prospered the work in my hand against satan, will provide for you abundantly, when either my blood shall water the doctrine taught by me, or he of his mercy otherwise provide, to put an end to this my battle.

* Word. † Power. ‡ Evil, troublesome.

CERTAIN EPISTLES AND LETTERS OF THE SERVANT OF GOD,

JOHN KNOX,

SENT FROM DIVERS PLACES TO HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILIARS IN CHRIST JESUS.

WORTHY TO BE READ BECAUSE OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE WRITER, THE SOLIDITY OF THE MATTER, AND THE COMFORTABLE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE TO BE FOUND THEREIN.

Dr. M'Crie, in his life of Knox, mentions a manuscript volume in his possession which formerly belonged to the Rev. Robert Wodrow, and which is described in the preface to Crawford's edition of Knox's history. This volume contains copies of six tracts written by the Reformer, and forty-three letters which throw considerable light upon his character and history, and supplied Dr. M'Crie with much valuable information. At the beginning is written, "This book belonged sometime to Margaret Stewart, widow to Mr. Knox, afterwards married to the knight of Fawdonside; she was sister to the earl of Arran."

Dr. M'Crie kindly furnished transcripts of some of these letters for the present work; eleven of them are now printed for the first time. They manifest the spiritual feelings by which Knox was influenced, and the christian reader will derive benefit to his soul from their perusal.

Knox refers to these letters in his answer to Tyrie, (see p. 299,) and he printed one of the letters to his mother with his reply to the Jesuit.

Two letters are added from other sources.

LETTERS OF JOHN KNOX.

LETTER I.

*To his Sister.**

Grace and peace from God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, rest and be multiplied with you. Amen.

Beloved sister—after most hearty commendations—the remembrance of your continual battle is dolorous unto me, yet fear I nothing less than your victory by Him who ever hath vanquished, when satan appeared to have possessed all. The art of your adversary, dear sister, is subtle; in that he would cause you to abhor and hate that wherein alone stands salvation and life. Jesus, by interpretation is a Saviour, by reason that he saves his people from their sins, and Christ is called anointed, as Isaiah doth witness. The Spirit of God hath anointed our Saviour in so far as he is man. There is given unto him all power in heaven and earth, that from him, as from a fountain most abounding and an overflowing well, we may receive all that we have lost by the transgression of a man.

Now, sister, our adversary, knowing that the rest and tranquillity of our conscience depends upon this—that we embrace Jesus to be the only Saviour of the world; and that we learn to apply the sweetness of his name, which surpasses the odours of all fragrant smelling spices; for the corruption of our wounds, he labours to make that name odious, and this he does as an enemy not so much to you, as unto Jesus Christ, who by his own power has broken down his head, and also shall triumph over him in his members. You are sick, dear sister, and therefore no wonder albeit you (not of yourself, but by his continual

* Probably Marjory Bowes, his first wife, or her mother; Knox, however, applied the term in a general sense to all who were sisters in Christ. See Letter XIV.

assaults) abhor the succour of most wholesome food. I said unto you that I was sure that you remained not always in that bitterness of heart, for I perceived otherwise, both by your words and conditions. If you always hated Jesus, the Son of God, and abhorred the redemption that is by his blood, you should never so seek comfort nor consolation from God, neither by my prayers nor my company, but you would hate me as the rest of the wicked world doth. For such as are reprobate can never love God nor the members of Christ's body, but must needs persecute them, and chiefly such as in whom the Spirit of God worketh abundantly. Witness king Saul, who to his death persecuted David; albeit David at all times was beneficial unto him. The contrary, reigning in the two, never permitted concord to stand between them. Further, sister, such as taste the cup of desperation without any motion of thirst of grace, never taste any sweetness of God's promises; the contrary whereof I have known in you, whereto I am sure your own conscience must needs bear witness. And so, sister, you are sick, but will not die, your faith is weak and sorely troubled, but you are not unfaithful; nor yet shall your infirmities be imputed unto you.

Remember, dear sister, what ignorance, what fear, and what appearance of incredulity remained in Christ's disciples after they had heard his most plain doctrine, and after they had seen the power of his works, a longer time than you have yet continued in Christ. That is not so often and so diligently rehearsed by the evangelists without a most special cause, but to be a comfort unto us; so that although both fear and doubt remain in our consciences, even of long time, yet is there no danger to such as once have embraced God in his promises. For his majesty is such, that he cannot repent him of his gifts. To embrace Christ, to refuse idolatry, to confess the truth, to love the members of Christ's body, are the gifts of God; therefore he cannot repent that he hath made you partaker thereof. But lest you should wax negligent, and desire to remain in this wicked life, his godly wisdom permits you to taste a little of that bitter cup that his own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, did taste in greatest abundance; and it is profitable that you do so to the mortification of the wicked carcass.

After the writing of this preceding, your brother and

mine, Harry Wickliff, advertised me by writing, that your adversary took occasion to trouble you, because that I did start back from you when you were rehearsing your infirmities. I remember myself so to have done, and that is my common custom, when any thing pierces or touches my heart. Call to your mind, what I did standing at the cupboard in Alnwick. In very deed I thought that no creature had been so tempted as I was, and when I heard proceed from your mouth the very same words that he troubles me with, I did wonder, and from my heart lament your sore trouble, knowing in myself the dolour thereof. And no other thing, dear sister, meant I, and therefore think not that I either flatter you, or yet that I conceal any thing from you; no, for if I had been so minded, I had not been so plain in other cases. My other great labours permit me not to write as I would. I will pray for your continuance with Christ.

At Newcastle in great haste, the 26th February, 1553.

JOHN KNOX.

LETTER II.

To his Sister.

MOST dear sister, whom I reverence, as it becomes, in all godliness, thinking it my bounden duty to visit those who are always troubled. I have rather taken occasion by reason of this messenger who partly can recite my present impediments, all which I remit to the merciful providence of my good God, to whose protection I unfeignedly commit you and others for whom I am more fearful than for myself. But as for you, sister, I only lament your corporeal trouble, which albeit it be painful, yet is transitory, and shall shortly have an end, and the dolour thereof be recompensed above all that man's heart can ask or devise, for the afflictions of this life are not worthy of that glory that shall be shown forth in us, whom God our Father hath appointed to be like to the image of his only Son Jesus Christ; whom it behoved to suffer dolour in such sort that he was compelled to cry in anguish of heart—"My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me!" Which affliction God our Father laid upon Him, not only for a satisfaction to his godly justice, but also for most singular comfort to such

as are troubled, as of necessity every member of Christ's body must be at one time or other. For seeing we have a Bishop, who by experience has learned in himself to have compassion upon our dolour and infirmities, we ought of good reason to quiet ourselves—knowing undoubtedly that he who has vanquished in himself, has vanquished for us. For no debtor was he to death or dolour, but he suffered all for our cause. A portion whereof the providence of our God wills that we also sometime taste, not only to mortify in us the pleasures and affections of the flesh that reign in others, but also to let us feel in ourselves how horrible is sin, and what it is to abide the hot displeasure of God's wrath for ever. So that, being assured of our redemption in Christ's blood, we may unfeignedly render thanks for his fatherly mercy, who correcteth every son whom he receiveth to his favour, to the end aforesaid. And so, if flesh should suffer greatly, ought we to rejoice that it has pleased the goodness of our God to print in our heart the seal of his mercy.

Our impatience, albeit we ought to fight against it, is not damnable, seeing we are the members of Christ's body, therein engrafted by faith, which is the free gift of our God, and not proceeding from our works; out of which we cannot be cut by any assaults of our adversary, whom it behoves to rage against us, because he is a spirit confirmed in malice against God and his elect. But let us not fear him, seeing he is confounded, and is broken, and does only abide that day, when he shall be committed to torment for ever. Rejoice, sister, and be constant, for the Lord cometh and shall not tarry; and thus I commit you to the protection of Him, who cannot deceive such as call upon his name. My commendations to those that *affeirs.**

At Carlisle, 26th July, 1553.

Your Brother,

JOHN KNOX.

LETTER III.

To ————.

DEARLY beloved sister in our Lord Jesus. The troubles sustained by you, as they are to the mortification of the

* Are near to you.

wicked flesh, so are they dolorous unto me. Not that I fear any deadly damnation to follow thereupon, but that I lament your bodily inquietudes, and most that you are afraid when there is no cause. What wonder that the devil provoke you to idolatry, seeing he durst do the same to the Son of God himself. I am sure that your heart neither thirsts nor desires to invocate or make prayer unto bread,* nor unto any other creature, but to the living God only, and that you abhor idolatry. So long it were not sin unto you, albeit a thousand times a day you were assaulted. Alas, sister, your imbecility troubles me, that I should know you to be so weak, that you should be moved for so small a matter. But your weakness is not reckoned, but by Jesus our Lord it is excused; for he breaks not down the bruised reed, nor yet quenches the smoking flax: which words are most comfortable to us. How weak soever we be, he will not cast us away, but will feed and make us strong; and therefore Paul glories in his infirmities, affirming that when he is weak, then is he in greatest surety. The small and imperfect knowledge which now we have, shall every day increase, and when we are delivered from this mortal carcass, we shall see and behold the glory and wisdom of our God for ever. It is not necessary to put me in remembrance to call for your deliverance. In God's presence I write, that as often as I find the spirit to call for myself, so often forget I not you; which cometh not of me, but of the Holy Spirit, that so teacheth me. And albeit I should cease, yourself should cease, and all other creatures should cease, yet your dolour continually crieth and returns not void from the presence of our God. And therefore, sister, abide patiently that final and sure deliverance; remember that the holy Son of God cried thrice with tears; and in place of sweat, blood flowed from his body through the vehemence of his pain; and yet must he needs drink of the cup prepared by his Father. If the Son of God so suffered, in whom there was never sin nor deceit, what becomes us to do? Stand in God's promises, and the end shall be joyful. Great labours, and partly troubles of mind, will not suffer me to write more. The spirit of the kind Jesus assist you to the end.

Your Brother,

JOHN KNOX.

* The Romish host.

LETTER IV.

To ————.

Dearly beloved sister in Jesus our Lord; perceiving by your letter the subtle assaults of the devil, I must needs lament your great trouble, not that I fear any danger eternally, but that I pity the anguish of your heart, willing to rejoice in Jesus and in the redemption that is by his blood, and not the less impeded so to do by the art or deceit of that serpent satan, which neither is imputed for sin now, nor yet shall appear hereafter to your confusion. For it is not you that judge wickedly of the Son of God, but your enemy that would persuade you so to do; whom learn to resist in the face, not standing with him in question and debate, but suddenly repelling all his deceit as unworthy to be answered to, seeing it is contrary to the principles of your faith. He would persuade you that God's word is of no effect, but that it is a vain tale invented by man; and so that all which is spoken of Jesus, the Son of God, is but a vain fable. Do you not perceive that the devil, in making that persuasion, is the selfsame spirit whom Jesus affirmed to be a man-slayer and a manifest liar? Why do you not here laugh him to scorn, and mock him in your heart, seeing he denies the thing which your eyes may see, and your ears hear, your senses understand, and all the powers of your soul grant and confess. He says the scriptures of God are but a tale, and no credit is to be given them. Alas! sister, that you should not perceive his manifold deceit.

The word of God says, that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, of nothing making and producing all creatures, whom his majesty guides and rules to this day. And albeit the devil did persuade some philosophers to affirm that the world never had a beginning, yet the verities following in the same word of God shall compel even the devil himself to grant and acknowledge God alone to be the Creator, and the world not to have a beginning of itself. The voice of God said to the woman after her offence, "In pain shalt thou bear thy children." I pray you, sister, is it not a manifest and impudent lie to affirm and say that this word is vain—doth not your own heart witness that the word of God is true,

and takes effect in every woman before she be a mother; and the same voice that denounced the pain upon the woman, pronounced also that the seed of the woman, which is Jesus, our body, should break down the serpent's head, and dissolve the works of the devil, which are sin and death. The voice of God affirms that bodily death entered into the world by sin, for by one man entered in sin, and by the means of sin came in death; so that death passeth throughout all men, because that all men sinned.

Beloved sister, does not your own heart justify God's word to be true? Feel you not sin working unto you to your great displeasure? and know you not this by the experience of all that are passed before you? That statute is to all men—to die—and the same voice that affirms sin to be the cause of death, also affirms Jesus to be the author and cause of life. Seeing, therefore, you are compelled to grant the one, for who can deny that death devours this mortal carcass, why doubt you the other to be true? But you doubt not. It is your enemy that would so persuade you. Contemn him to the face, and his assaults shall not hurt you. Cleave only to the truth of God's word, only, I say, believe, and you shall be safe; and albeit you find not such perfection as you desire, yet cry, with the man that was sore troubled, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." In suggesting that you are like to Francis Spira, the devil lies.* Alas! may you not easily perceive this? You never were a preacher, you never denied any part of Christ's doctrine before the world, you never blasphemed Christ in your heart, for, if you had done so, you never would afterwards have sought for remedy; and you seek to me, the minister of Christ, which is indeed to seek Christ himself. The nature of the damned and reprobate is ever to flee from Christ.

There has no temptation yet apprehended you which does not commonly assault the elect of God. The devil is so subtle, that he can cause his temptations to appear to be the cogitations of our own hearts. But so they are not, you hate them, you lament and mourn for them, which is the testimony of your faith; which albeit God suffer to be tried, as through a furnace, yet shall he not suffer it to be quenched; for whom he has given to his Son Jesus are

* Francis Spira was an Italian of rank, who having embraced the truth, subsequently returned to popery, and soon afterwards died in deep distress of mind. His case is well known, and occurred a few years before the time when this letter was written.

received in sure custody, and shall be like to his glorified body.

Be not afraid albeit the tempter trouble you; remember how bold he was with our Captain and Head. Did he not call him from Jerusalem to the mountain, and, boasting himself to be the Lord of the world, promised the glory thereof to Christ, if he would fall down and worship him—which temptation was greater and more bold than any that he has used against you. Say to him when he assaults you; Avaunt, satan, the Lord confound thee;—and albeit you find not such sweetness as you would, yet be sure that the sob of your heart pierces the heaven, and does not return without the petition being granted of God, as your utility* doth require. Remember, sister, that the tempter departed from Christ only for a time, and therefore be not discouraged, albeit he return to you with new and deceitful assaults. Do you not perceive you are not within his girn;† for if you were, to what purpose would he trouble you? He is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, whom he has devoured already he seeks no more. Formerly he troubled you, that there is not a Saviour, and now he affirms that you shall be like to Francis Spira who denied Christ's doctrine; does not the one of these temptations make the other to be a lie, so that you may perceive both to be lies? He says, That you are not sorry for your offences; answer unto him that your sufficiency lies not within yourself, nor yet in your repentance, but in the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. And you have cause to praise God who suffers you not to rejoice in sin, neither yet to trust in your own justice;‡ but you desire only to be clothed with Christ's righteousness, as you are, by faith in his blood. Think not, sister, that I esteem it any trouble to comfort you. Be as bold upon me, in godliness, as you would be upon any flesh, and no other labours, save only the blowing of my master's trumpet,§ shall impede me to do the uttermost of my power. I will daily pray that your dolour may be relieved, and doubt not to obtain the same, to the glory of our God, and your everlasting comfort.

From Newcastle, 1553.

Your Brother,

JOHN KNOX.

* Need.
† His snare, or trap.
‡ Righteousness.
§ The preaching of the gospel.

LETTER V.

The first letter to his mother-in-law, Mistress Bowes.

Right dearly beloved mother in our Saviour Jesus Christ. When I call to mind and revolve with myself, the troubles and afflictions of God's elect from the beginning, (in which I do not forget you,) there are within my heart two extreme contraries; a dolour almost unspeakable, and a joy and comfort, which by man's senses cannot be comprehended or understood. The chief causes of dolour are two; the one is the remembrance of sin, which I daily feel remaining in this corrupt nature; which was and is so odious and detestable in the presence of our heavenly Father, that by no other sacrifice could or might the same be cleansed, except by the blood and death of the only innocent Son of God. When I deeply consider the cause of Christ's death to have been sin, and that sin yet dwells in all flesh, with Paul I am compelled to sob and groan as a man under a heavy burden; yea, and sometimes to cry, Oh wretched and miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin!

The other cause of my dolour, is, that such as most gladly would remain together for mutual comfort one of another, cannot be suffered so to do. Since the first day that it pleased the providence of God to bring you and me into familiarity, I have always delighted in your company, and when labours would permit, you know I have not spared hours to talk and commune with you, the fruit whereof I did not then fully understand or perceive. But now absent, and so absent that by bodily presence neither of us can receive comfort of the other, I call to mind how that oftimes when with dolorous hearts we have begun our talking, God hath sent great comfort unto both, which now for my own part, I commonly want. The exposition of your troubles, and acknowledging of your infirmity were first unto me a very mirror and glass wherein I beheld myself so rightly painted forth, that nothing could be more evident to my own eyes. And then, the searching of the scriptures for God's sweet promises, and for his mercies freely given unto miserable offenders, (for his nature delighteth to show mercy where most misery reigns,) the collection and applying of God's mercies, I

say, was unto me as the breaking and handling with my own hands of the most sweet and delectable ointments, whereof I could not but receive some comfort by their natural sweet odours.

But now, although I never lack the presence and plain image of my own wretched infirmity, yet seeing sin so manifestly abounds in all estates, I am compelled to thunder out the threatenings of God against the obstinate rebels; in doing whereof, albeit, as God knoweth, I am no malicious nor obstinate sinner, I sometimes am wounded, knowing myself to be criminal and guilty in many, yea, in all things, (malicious obstinacy laid aside,) that I reprehend in others. Judge not, mother, that I write these things, debasing myself otherwise than I am; no, I am worse than my pen can express. In body you think I am no adulterer; let so be, but the heart is infected with foul lusts, and it will lust, although I lament ever so much. Externally I commit no idolatry; but my wicked heart loveth itself, and cannot be refrained from vain imaginations, yea, not from such as were the fountain of all idolatry. I am no man-killer with my hands; but I help not my needy brother so liberally as I may and ought. I steal not horse, money, or clothes from my neighbour; but that small portion of worldly substance I bestow not as rightly as his holy law requires. I bear no false witness against my neighbour in judgment, or otherwise before men; but I speak not the truth of God so boldly as it becomes his true messenger to do. And thus in conclusion, there is no vice repugning to God's holy will expressed in his law, wherewith my heart is not infected.

This much was written and indited before the receipt of your letters, which I received the 21st of June. They were unto my heart some comfort, for divers causes not necessary to be rehearsed; but most, as God knoweth, for that I find a congruence betwixt us in spirit, being so far distant in body. For when that digestedly I advised* with your letter, I considered that I myself was complaining even the self-same things at that very instant that I received your letter. By my pen, from a sorrowful heart, I could not but burst forth and say, "O Lord, how wonderful are thy works! How thou dost try and prove thy chosen children as gold by the fire! How thou canst,

* I carefully examined.

in a manner, hide thy face from thy own spouse, that thy presence afterwards may be more delectable! How thou canst bring thy saints low, that thou mayest carry them to glory everlasting! How thou canst suffer thy strong faithful messengers in many things yet to wrestle with wretched infirmity and feeble weakness, yea, and sometimes permit them horribly to fall, partly, that no flesh shall have whereof it may glory before thee; and partly that others of smaller estate and meaner gifts in thy church, might receive some consolation, although they find in themselves wicked motions which they are not able to expel!

My purpose was, before I received your letter, to have exhorted you to patience, and to fast adhering to God's promises, although your flesh, the devil, and your other enemies, would persuade you to the contrary; for, by the arts and subtleties that the adversary uses against me, I not only do conjecture, but also plainly see your assaults and troubles. And so likewise in the bowels of Christ's mercy, most earnestly I beseech you, by that infirmity which you know remains in me, (worse I am than I can write,) patiently to bear, although you have not such perfection as you would. And although your motions be such as are most vile and abominable, yet not to sorrow above measure. If I, to whom God has given greater gifts, (I write to his praise,) be yet so wrapped in misery, that what I would, I cannot do, and what I would not, with St. Paul I say, that, daily, yea every hour and moment, I devise to do, and in my heart, fight I never so fast in the contrary, I perform and do it. If such wretched wickedness remain in God's chief ministers, what wonder although the same remain in you? If God's strongest men of war are beaten back in their face, so that they cannot destroy nor kill what they would, is it any such offence to you to be tossed as you complain, that therefore you should distrust God's free promises? God forbid, dear mother! the power of God is known by our weakness; and these dolours and infirmities are most profitable to us, for by the same is our pride beaten down, which is not easy otherwise to be done. By them are our miseries known, so that we, acknowledging ourselves miserable, seek the physician. By them come we, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, to the hatred of sin; and by them come we to the hunger and thirst of justice;* and to desire to be dissolved,

* Righteousness.

and so to reign with our Christ Jesus, which without this battle and sorrow this flesh could never do. And so from the dolours I proceed to the comfort.

As the causes of dolour are two, which are present sin, and the lack of such company as those in whom we could most delight; so are the causes of my comfort, not imagined of my brain, but pronounced first by God, and afterwards grafted in the hearts of God's children by his Holy Spirit. They are likewise two, which are, a justice inviolable offered by our flesh before the throne of our heavenly Father, and an assured hope of that general assembly and gathering together of God's dispersed flock, in that day when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, when death shall be vanquished, and may no more dissever such as fearing God this day in the flesh, mourn under the burden of sin. Of our present justice, notwithstanding sin remains in our mortal bodies, are we assured by the faithful witness of Jesus Christ, John the apostle, saying, "If we confess our sins, faithful and just is God to remit and forgive our sins." Mark the words of the apostle, If we confess our sins, God must forgive them, because he is faithful and just. To confession of sins are these things requisite; first, we must acknowledge the sin; and it is to be noted that sometimes God's very elect, although they have sinned most heinously, do not acknowledge sin, and therefore cannot at all times confess the same; for sin is not known until such time as the veil is taken from the conscience of the offender, that he may see and behold the filthiness of sin, what punishment by God's just judgment is due for the same. And then, which is the second thing requisite to confession, begins the hatred of sin, and of ourselves for contemning of God and of his holy law, whereof last springs that which we call hope of mercy; which is nothing else but a sob from a troubled heart, confounded and ashamed for sin, thirsting for remission and God's free mercy, whereupon of necessity must follow this conclusion, God has remitted and freely forgiven the sin, and why?—For "He is faithful and just," saith the apostle. Comfortable and marvellous causes! God is faithful, therefore he must forgive sin. A comfortable consequent upon a most sure ground! for God's fidelity can no more fail than can himself!

Then let this argument be gathered for our comfort—the office of the faithful is to keep promise, but God is faithful,

therefore he must keep promise. That remission of sins is promised to such as be repentant, I need not now to recite the places. But let this collection of the promises be made; God promises remission of sins to all that confess the same, but I confess my sins, for I see the filthiness thereof, and how justly God may condemn me for my iniquities. I sob and lament for that I cannot be quit and rid of sin; I desire to live a more perfect life. These are infallible signs, seals, and tokens that God has remitted the sin, for God is faithful that so has promised, and can no more deceive than he can cease to be God.

But what reason is this? God is just, therefore he must forgive sin.—A wondrous cause and reason indeed! For the flesh and natural man can understand nothing but the contrary, for thus must it reason; the justice of God is offended by my sins, so God must needs have a satisfaction, and require a punishment. If we understand of whom God requires satisfaction, whether of us, or of the hands of his only Son, and whose punishment is able to recompense our sins, then shall we have great cause to rejoice, remembering that God is a just God, for the office of the just man is to stand content when he has received his duty. But God has received already, at the hands of his only Son, all that is due for our sins, and so his justice cannot require or crave any more of us, either satisfaction or compensation for our sins.

Advert, mother, that the sure pillars and foundation of our salvation are God's faithfulness and justice. He that is faithful, has promised free remission to all penitent sinners, and he that is just, has received already a full satisfaction for the sins of all those that embrace Christ Jesus to be the only Saviour of the world. What remains then to us to be done? Nothing but to acknowledge our misery and wretchedness, which no flesh can do so unfeignedly as they that daily feel the weight of sin. And, mother, we have none other cause of desperation, although the devil rage ever so cruelly, and although the flesh be ever so frail, daily and hourly lusting against God's holy commandments, yea, striving against the same. This is not the time of justice before our own eyes, we look for that which is promised, the kingdom everlasting, prepared to us from the beginning, whereof we are made heirs by God's appointment, reabled (legitimated or restored) thereto by Christ's death, to whom we shall be gathered, when after

we shall never depart; which to remember is my singular comfort, but thereof now I cannot write. My commendations to all whom it concerns. I commit you to the protection of the Omnipotent.

At London, the 23rd of June, 1553, your son unfeigned.

JOHN KNOX.

LETTER VI.

To his Mother.

"Behold a little and he shall come, that shall take away the captivity of Israel."

DEARLY beloved mother in our Sovereign Jesus Christ, the remembrance of that cross which you suffer daily, is unto me a sharp spur pricking me, when else I would be slothful, to call upon my God for comfort of his Holy Spirit; not only to myself, but unto such as taste of that cup which is most proper to* the sons of God, whereof in these parts there are no small number, with whom I being partly practised,† do the better learn the art of the adversary, who by one of two means troubles us the members of Christ's body.

First, he goes about for a time to extenuate sin, and makes us to think nothing of it—affirming, even as he did to the first woman, that the transgressions of God's commandments are no such matter as we esteem them, and so he labours to bring us in contempt of God. And often it is that God's elect offend most heinously in this, for no sinful flesh has to glory in itself; from which when they are called back by God's free mercy unto repentance, then does our enemy rage as a roaring lion, labouring to bring the weak and infirm to desperation, while God permits both to exercise his elect, lest they should rejoice in this worldly vanity.

Beware of an assault of that wicked spirit, (he is a liar and the father of lies,) for most commonly he goes about to undermine our faith, labouring to persuade us that we have not the thing, which God hath witnessed we have—I mean a lively faith; and this is no new practice of his, but is the same which he used against our Lord Jesus

* Suited for. † Frequently in conversation.

Christ, when, after Christ's baptism, wherein the Father's voice was heard, saying, "This is my well-beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," the tempter durst bear Christ in hand* that he was not the Son of God, because he was in the wilderness hungry without comfort, and so forth, as I suppose you understand the temptation. Dear mother, he that is sorry for the absence of virtue is not altogether destitute of the same, for the infinite goodness cannot send away the hungry soul empty. Our hunger cries unto God, albeit we understand not the same.

These things, because I have written to you before at large, I now but touch upon them, which I would not have spoken at all was not I afraid that you should think me to have forgotten you. Mother, be you nothing abashed, for God shall put an end to all our dolours. The troubles of this life in body or in spirit, declare us to be members of Him, who has passed before us into glory, by afflictions of all sorts. The flesh can do nothing under the cross, but grudge and lament, and no wonder although it does so, for the corruption thereof compels it in loving itself to murmur against God. But merciful is he who will not require of us his weak creatures, having will, but lacking power, above that which flesh can give; and that is nothing at all, as the apostle Paul witnesses, saying, "I know that in me, that is in the flesh, remains no good." If any good appear, it is neither of us nor from us, but it is the free gift of Him, who willeth well to his own afflicted creatures. The chief sign of God's favour is, that we unfeignedly know and understand ourselves to be nothing without his support, and that we despair of all things within ourselves, for then must we trust the help of our God. And God can no more deny his mercy and grace to such as ask him, than he can cease to be God; and therefore, dear mother, abide patiently the Lord's deliverance, for he shall come when least expected, whose Holy Spirit rest with you for ever.

Yours to his power,

JOHN KNOX.

* Express his doubt.

LETTER VII.

To his Mother and to his Spouse.

Dearly beloved mother, with my very hearty commendations; after the writing of my other letters which have lain beside me a long time for want of a bearer, I received your letters as I returned from Kent, where I was labouring before the receipt thereof. I was assured of your trouble, and I suspect a greater to be upon you both, than your letters declare to me. As for your spiritualness, dear mother, it behoved Christ to suffer and so to enter into his glory, and of necessity every member of his body, in his own degree and time, must suffer with the Head. But damnation (is not) to such as once have been ingrafted within that body, as I am, so far as creature can be, most surely persuaded you are, as all signs and tokens most evidently show, as I have written unto you in divers letters.

It pleases me very well that the enemy assaults you with diverse and new assaults, for that is the most sure proof that by his old tricks he has not prevailed. Remember, mother, that so long as he that besieges a castle or strong hold, is continually shooting his artillery or his ordnance, there is some strength within, which he would have destroyed and beaten down; otherwise it were foolish and vain to spend the force of his ordnance when no resistance were made. And therefore, dear mother, you remember well, and I am rejoiced at your remembrance, where you write that only the regenerate man fights the battle. It is even so indeed. So spiritual can we not be in this life, but that the flesh will ever make repugnance.* But so carnal may we be that the power of the Spirit is altogether quenched, and thus persons, as Paul speaks of them, after they have ceased to mourn, give themselves wholly to filthiness, to perform the same in all greediness. It is not so with you, mother. You lament and mourn that you cannot have such perfection, as God and his word require of you. You fight with the weak strength that is left, which although it appears weak in your sight, yet before God it is most valiant. A sob to resist such assaults is most acceptable in the presence of Him who requires nothing

* Opposition.

more than that we know and confess our imperfections, which is the most triumphant victory which we can show, fighting under that danger. Despair not, sister, you have brethren here, even such as are judged to be most perfect.

My great labours, wherein I desire your daily prayers, will not suffer me to satisfy my mind touching all the process between your husband and you, touching my matter concerning his daughter. I praise God heartily both for your boldness and constancy. But I beseech you, mother, trouble not yourself too much therewith. It becomes me now to jeopard my life for the comfort and deliverance of my own flesh, as I will do by God's grace, both fear and friendship of all earthly creatures laid aside. I have written to your husband, the contents whereof I trust our brother Harry will declare to you and to my wife. If I escape sickness and imprisonment, be sure to see me soon. Yet, mother, depend not upon me too much, for what am I but a wretched sinner? If you receive any comfort, it comes from above, from God the Father, who shall provide for you abundantly. Whatever becomes of me, remember, mother, the gifts of God are not bound to any one man, but are common to every man, in his measure, that calls upon the Lord Jesus, whose omnipotent Spirit rest with you for ever.

The 20th of September, 1553.

Your Son,
JOHN KNOX.

LETTER VIII.

To his Sister.

"Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all," &c.

DEARLY beloved sister, whom I no less tender than it becomes a weak member to do another, so far as the frailty of this corrupt nature will permit—when I revolve the sore and continual trouble you suffer, sometimes I remember also the charge thrice together given to Peter by Christ himself, saying, "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep, feed my sheep." Whereby the wisdom of God would signify unto us two things most worthy to be noted, and ever to be borne in mind, not only of the sheep, but also

of the pastor; that to the flock of Christ the lively word of God is so necessary, that without the same they can continue no while in the true knowledge of God. For by it, that is by God's word, the soul begins to receive life, and by the same word receives its strength and spiritual consolation, by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ remaining in our hearts by true faith, whereof God's word is the mother, nurse, and maintenance; for that Christ means, when he commands his lambs and sheep to be fed and guided. Lambs we are when we cannot for our infirmity and weakness digest any part of God's word, but as it is broken unto us by our pastors, as were the people of the Jews after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, hearing themselves justly condemned; for they cruelly, and without crime committed against them, shed the blood of the innocent Son of God—hearing their condemnation, I say, they cried, "What shall we do?" which words declare them to be lambs weak, yea dead, yet desirous to be fed, and like unto these are all this day, who, hearing the great abominations wherein they have been long blinded, unfeignedly thirst to know the truth and obey the same.

And for such, no doubt God doth provide one Peter or other; that is, such as unfeignedly believing Jesus to be the Son of the living God, fervently thirst for the same knowledge to be dispersed abroad in the ears of many sheep. We are to be fed after some knowledge, and after open profession of Christ, for yet many things comfortable to our hearts, and profitable for our erudition, remain hid for us; as were the self-same people after baptism continually abiding together in the doctrine of the apostles, which thing declared evidently that every day they desired to be fed with God's word. And as sheep we are to be guided, for so do I understand the third kind of feeding, by God's word, all the days of this our transitory and troublesome life. For like as sheep have no judgment to discern between wholesome and noisome grass, so hath not the flock of Christ wisdom to avoid sects and heresies, yea abomination and idolatry, but by God's word, which ought purely and sincerely to sound from the pastor's mouth. The sheep has discretion by God's grace to discern between the voice of the pastor and the voice of a stranger, and to follow the pastor, and fly from the murderer and cruel thief. But if the pastor sleep, and altogether keep his tongue close, then surely shall the sheep

go astray—not that they can perish for ever, for that is impossible, seeing that Christ Jesus, the only sovereign Shepherd, has taken them into his protection ; but that they may be scattered in the day of darkness and mist, as oft-times the elect have been, and yet they are gathered again by the voice of that Pastor who not only feeds, but also most tenderly loves his sheep, committed to his protection by God his Father, by him to receive life, and that abundantly. Therefore he provides some Peters in every age, to call again the sheep to the only Pastor of their souls, Jesus Christ, whose voice the sheep hear and thirst for. Of which flock and number I am most undoubtedly persuaded that you are, albeit weak and sorely troubled. Sister, remember that the power, might, and virtue of Jesus our Saviour is made known in our weakness. He despises not the lame and crooked sheep ; no, he takes the same upon his back, and bears it to the flock because it cannot go ; that so the unspeakable mercy and kindness of the Shepherd may be known, and praised by us his sheep. Were we always strong, then should we not taste how sweet and merciful the relief of our God is from these daily cares ; and so should we grow proud, negligent, and unmindful, which estate is the most dangerous of all others.

But now I had almost forgotten myself, for briefly I intended only to have spoken of the two observations which I thought worthy to be noted upon the commandment of Jesus Christ to Peter ; whereof the former was, that Christ's flock in youth, in strength, in age, are to be fed and ruled by God's word ; whereto this will I add, that the most evident token by which the sheep of Christ is discerned and known from the goats and swine of the world, is, that the sheep thirsts ever for the voice of its own pastor, and loves unfeignedly such as bring the same to its ears. The goats and swine both hate the word of God, and the messengers thereof. And in this thing, sister, you have great cause to rejoice, for had you not been one of Christ's sheep, no dearer had I been unto you than to others who daily thirst for my blood and destruction. The second note I made on Christ's words to Peter, is, wherein appears the care and diligence of a true pastor unto Christ's flock ; for Christ would say : Peter, thou confessest that thou bearest an unfeigned love unto me, *that* shalt thou declare in feeding of my lambs, in nourishing of my sheep, and in guiding of the same. A

thing rightly expounded and weighed by Peter, commanding the same to all pastors in these words—"Feed, so much as in you is, the flock of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. v. 2.) Oh alas! how small is the number of pastors that obey this commandment; but this matter will I not touch upon, except that I, not speaking of others, will accuse myself that I do not, I confess, the uttermost of my power in feeding the lambs and sheep of Christ. I satisfy, peradventure, many men in the small labours that I take. But truly I satisfy not my own conscience. I might be more diligent in going about from place to place, although I should beg, and preach Christ: I should remain careful to comfort the afflicted and you amongst many.* I have done somewhat, but not according to my duty: the slander and fear of men have impeded me from exercising my pen so oft as I would; yea very shame hath called and holden me from your company, when I was most surely persuaded that God had appointed me at that time to comfort and feed your hungry and afflicted soul. And this, sister, while I revolve with myself, I think I am criminal and guilty, for I ought more to regard the affliction you sustain than any slander of such as either know not, or will not know, the necessity of them that labour under the most heavy and unpleasing cross. God of his infinite mercy remove not only from me all fear that tends not to godliness, but also from the suspicion of others to judge of me otherwise than it becomes one member to judge of another. As for myself, I do confess, my right ear, my right thumb, and right toe must be sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, wherewith Aaron and his sons were consecrated and appointed to that priesthood; that is, my best work must be purged with Christ's blood, and of one thing I rejoice, that I find in myself compassion for your trouble. Marvellous are the works of God. It may be that a cause of your trouble is a trial of us, that proves us to be pastors. Yea, and of others that are called earnest professors, to examine and try out what care and solicitude we will take of the weak and infirm sheep. If we be, as we are named, true pastors and christian professors, there can no member of Christ's body suffer within the reach of our knowledge, but thereupon we must needs be compassionate; for that is the nature of lively ones, to

* Knox was constantly engaged in preaching through different parts of England during the latter part of king Edward's reign.

suffer with others, studying always to support what they may. Ye are in a part the cause that at present I am in this quarter; for knowing your sore anguish, and the small number of those that can rightly lay the medicine to the wound, my conscience pricked with real pity, compels me to remain, contrary to my determined purposes.* Now, sister, rest in Christ, and be in comfort now and ever.

Your brother,

JOHN KNOX.

LETTER IX.

To his Mother and his Wife.

From the eyes of his saints shall the Lord wipe away all tears and mourning.

DEAR mother and spouse, unfeignedly beloved in the bowels of our Saviour Christ Jesus, with my very hearty commendations. I perused both your letters, not only directed to me, but also that which sorrowfully complains of the unthankfulness of your brother as also of mine, that he should not have been equally informed of my coming in the country as others, whereof the enemy would persuade you, an argument most false and untrue, that we judge you not to be of our number.

Dear mother, be not so suddenly moved—he is your enemy that so would persuade you. I take God to record in my conscience, that there is none this day in all the realm of England, with whom I would more gladly speak, (she only whom God hath offered me and commanded me to love as my own flesh excepted,) than with you. For your sakes principally I enterprised this journey; for hearing my servant to be stayed, and his letters to be taken, I could no wise be pacified, (for the most part of my letters were for your instruction and comfort,) till I had further knowledge of your estate; and that you were not sooner advertised, only the want of a faithful messenger was the cause. For my coming to the country was so soon noised abroad, that with great difficulty could I be conveyed from one place to another. I knew no such danger as was suspected by my brethren; for as for my letters, in them is

* Knox remained preaching in England some time after the accession of queen Mary.

nothing contained but exhortation to constancy in that truth which God has openly laid before our eyes, which I am not minded to deny whenever such question shall be demanded of me. But the cause moving me that for a time I would have been close, was that I purposed, if so had been possible, to have spoken with my wife, which now I perceive is not like to be, until God offer some better occasion. My brethren, partly by admonition, and partly by tears, compel me to obey somewhat contrary to my own mind; for never can I die in a more honest quarrel, nor suffer than as a witness for that truth whereof God has made me a messenger, which with heart I believe most assuredly; the Holy Ghost bearing witness to my conscience, and with mouth, I trust to God, to confess in presence of the world, the only doctrine of life. Notwithstanding this my mind, if God shall prepare the way, I will obey the voices of my brethren, and give place to the fury and rage of satan for a time. And so can I not perceive how that I can speak with either of you at this time. But if God please to preserve me at this time, whereof I am not yet resolved, then shall there lack in me no good will that ye may know the place of my residence, and further of my mind.

But now, dear mother, have we cause to rejoice; for our heavenly Father, who called us by grace, to write in our hearts the signs and seals of our election in Christ Jesus his Son, begins now to correct our crookedness, and to make us like, in suffering afflictions, shame, and rebuke of the world, to the great Bishop of our souls; who by much tribulation entered into his glory, as of necessity must every one to whom that kingdom is appointed. And therefore, mother, be nothing abashed of these most dolorous days, which shortly shall have an end, to our everlasting comfort. They are not crept upon us without knowledge and foresight, but oft have we heard these days forespoken of, therefore now grudge not, but patiently abide the Lord's deliverance. He that foretold the trouble, promises everlasting pleasure by the same word: although the flesh complain, despair nothing, for it must follow its own nature; and it is not damnable in the sight of our Father, although the corrupt frail flesh draw back and refuse the cross; for that is as natural to the flesh as in hunger and thirst to covet reasonable sustenance. Only follow not the affections of the flesh to commit iniquity; neither

for fear of death, nor for love of life, commit ye idolatry; neither yet give your presence where the same is committed, but hate it, avoid it, and flee from it. But your letter makes mention that you have pleasure and delight in it; no, mother, I perceive the contrary, for you complain and lament that such motions are within you; this is no sign that you delight in them, for no man complains of that wherein he delights. You are in no worse case touching that point, nor yet touching any other whereof you desire to be rid, than was the apostle, when with groaning and anguish of heart he cried out, "Oh unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin!" Read the whole chapter, and give glory to God who lets you know your own infirmity, that from Christ alone you may be content to receive that which never remained in corruptible flesh, that is, the justice which is acceptable before God, the justice by faith and not by works, that you may glory in him who freely gives that which we deserve not. And thus neither fear that, nor any other assaults of the devil, so long as in body you obey not his persuasions.

Shortness of time and multitude of cares will not let me write at this present so fully as I would. You desire me to charge you in such things as I want, God grant that ye may be able to relieve the needy; ye may be sure that I would be bold upon you, for of your good heart I am persuaded, but of your power and ability I greatly doubt. I will not tell you how rich I am, but from London I departed with less money than ten groats; but God has since provided, and will provide, I doubt not, hereafter abundantly for this life. Either the queen's majesty, or some treasurer will be forty pounds richer by me, for so much lack I of duty of my patents.* But that little troubles me. Rest in Christ Jesus.

1553. Your son,

JOHN KNOX.

* His salary as a preacher, due to him at the death of king Edward VI.

Dr. M'Crie says, "Having ascertained that his friends were not mistaken in the apprehensions which they felt for his safety, and that he could not hope to elude the pursuit of his enemies if he remained in England, Knox procured a vessel, (shortly after writing this letter,) which landed him safely at Dieppe on the 28th of January, 1554." On his return to that port in the July following, he wrote a letter to his mother, which is printed in this volume, p. 300.

LETTER X.

*To Mrs. Locke and Mrs. Hickman, Merchants' Wives in London.**

Dearly beloved sisters in our Saviour Jesus Christ, as I cease not to call for your continuance in the truth of that doctrine which once you have professed, so dare I not omit, besides my general admonition unto the whole congregation, which, I pray you, read and consider, particularly also not only to admonish you, but even by Christ's love and mercies to beseech you, not only to flee the present idolatry, but also, with such expedition as God shall offer unto you, by the counsel and discretion of those whom God hath appointed to be your heads—your husbands, I mean, to avoid as well the occasion of idolatry, as the plagues which shall assuredly follow that abomination.

Despise not my counsel, dear sisters, howbeit at this present time it appears hardly to be followed. God shall prepare an easy way, so that his godly will be preferred unto yours. It were more comfortable unto me, as touching the world, to know that you were at rest and quietness in your own house, than to be in such a strait as those that from realm to realm and city to city seek rest as pilgrims, and yet shall find none. But I take God to record in my conscience, that rather than I should know you to be so far convicted as to bow to idolatry, and daily to confirm the same by your presence, I would rather choose in your company to beg my bread, during such time as that abomination shall endure. And even should I know that you might live in those quarters with free consciences, which I greatly doubt you cannot, yet to know you are amongst those whom God shall plague in his fury, will be no small cross to my heart. But the Lord knew how to preserve the just Lot from the midst of Sodom before it was destroyed; and therein do I rejoice, knowing God's sure promise, that such as mourn in their hearts for abomination and mischievous iniquity, what times they oppress realms and cities, shall be marked in their foreheads

* After the accession of queen Mary, Knox continued to preach in Buckinghamshire and Kent till the beginning of November. He then returned to London, where he resided chiefly with Mr. Locke and Mr. Hickman, two respectable merchants of his acquaintance. —*M'Crie.*

by the same angel that is appointed to take vengeance upon the proud and abominable idolaters. Herein, I say, I am comforted, having good hope that God shall provide for you in the midst of a wicked generation; which no doubt will be punished according to the threatenings and voices of the prophets, who long and plainly cried, when alas! little regard was taken thereto. But when I consider and call to mind how God, I doubt not, brought us to such familiar acquaintance that your hearts were incensed and kindled with as special care over me as the mother uses to have over her natural child, and how my heart was opened and compelled in your presence to be more plain in such matters as have after come to pass, than ever I was to any—for you remember, as I suppose, how after great anguish and sorrow of heart, which many days I sustained, at last I was compelled with weeping tears to open unto you that which almost no man could have believed.* You remember my judgment, and what communication we had upon the same. God grant you to remain in the same mind that then I found you, which was, that you little regarded the rest of the world, or yet the love of your country, in respect of that life to come; and that you would rather leave possessions and friends, than that you should admit idolatry.

When I call to mind all these things, and how often I have exhorted you to take example by me, who was a stranger, and yet by God's grace had found favour not only in your eyes, but also before many, howbeit with none was I so familiar. And when I remember that commonly I used to admonish you to be of good comfort, albeit you should be compelled for Christ's sake to leave your native country; for God should never leave you comfortless, but should always provide for you, even as he had done for others, his elect, before you, and as you then saw his mercy showed unto me: and when I remember that I used all such admonitions, when there was no appearance of such troubles, as since have ensued, and more abundantly shall ensue;—when I call to mind all these things, I cannot otherwise judge, but that God used our familiarity and communication for that present, as a preparation for a sharper medicine; and therefore I cannot refrain most earnestly to exhort you, that you repugn not altogether to

* During the life of king Edward, Knox had strong presages of the troubles about to come upon England.

the admonitions of God, but give place to God's wrath, rather than expose yourself to the perdition both of body and soul. My heart weeps, and my eyes are not dry in requiring this of you, but very love compels me thereto. Remember, dear sisters, the shortness and vanity of all that is in earth. Remember the promises made to those that obey God's commandments. Lay before your eyes the horrible plagues that have fallen upon idolaters, of whom none shall enter into the kingdom of God; and call first for grace by Jesus to follow that which is acceptable in his sight, and therefore communicate with your faithful husbands, and then shall God, I doubt not, conduct your footsteps, and direct your counsels to his glory. So be it.

It not a little rejoiced my troubled heart, to know and understand that your constant love and care not only remains, but also increases towards me in these dangerous and wicked days; which is a most assured token and demonstration that perfect love is not extinguished by trouble and fear. Easy it is to show a face of love, where no danger appears, but in persecution no man can care or be solicitous for Christ's members, but such as receive life from that Head, who by many tribulations hath entered into his kingdom to prepare our places, and shortly shall return to put an end to all our cares, to wipe the tears from our eyes, and to render unto us, in that new earth and heavenly Jerusalem, a hundred fold more than in this miserable world we have lost for his sake; together with the life everlasting which he hath purchased unto us, neither with corruptible gold and silver, neither with the blood of calves or goats, much less by the oblations, or rather devilish conjuration of our abominable idol made of bread,* whose worshippers shall not escape the plague of God's wrath. But by his own most precious blood, once offered for all, to make perfect for ever those that shall be sanctified, of which number as my assured hope is that you are, so I heartily beseech the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in these dolorous days you may be so assisted by his Holy Ghost, that knowing his godly will you may be moved to obey the same, to his glory, and your eternal comfort. Amen.

My hearty commendations to your loving husbands, whose hearts may God comfort even with the sobs of the same heart, whom oft you have comforted. And now

* The Romish host or consecrated wafer.

most of all I commit you to the protection of Him, who shall not forget to recompense your careful mind over me. Most heartily thanking you for your particular remembrance and tokens, I bid you farewell by Jesus Christ our Lord, who shall gather us in glory when death may not dissever us. Rejoice, sisters, and continue, for the time approaches.

Your brother, who showed this vision unto you when no such thing was suspected.

JOHN KNOX.

LETTER XI.

*A comfortable Epistle sent to the afflicted Church of Christ, exhorting them to bear his cross with patience, looking every hour for his coming again to the great comfort and consolation of his chosen; with a prophecy of the destruction of the wicked.**

Pass through the city, and put a sign on the foreheads of those that mourn for the abominations that are committed. (Ezekiel ix.)

BELOVED in the Lord; when I ponder with myself, what was the state of Christ's true Church immediately after his death and passion, and what were the changes and great mutations in the commonwealth of Judea before the final desolation of the same, I cannot but fear that like plagues for like offences shall strike the realm of England; and in fearing, God knoweth, I lament and mourn; so can I not but rejoice, knowing that God's most merciful providence is no less careful this day, over his weak and feeble servants in the realm of England, than it was that day, over his weak and sorely oppressed flock in Jewry.†

What was the state of Christ's church between his death and resurrection, and from his resurrection to the sending of the Holy Ghost upon his disciples, and from that time also to the final destruction of Jerusalem? The

* In May 1554, Knox returned to Dieppe, from whence he wrote this epistle. The kindness with which he had been received in Switzerland, and various circumstances he had witnessed, gave him better hopes of a favourable termination of the persecutions then commencing.

† The care of God is always the same over his chosen.

plain scripture doth witness that it was most afflicted, without all comfort and worldly consolation, and that it was so persecuted, that havock was made in the Church of God. And what were the mutations and troubles in Judea and Jerusalem before the destruction of the same, such as are skilled in histories, and principally in Josephus and Egesippus, cannot be ignorant. For they witness, that over that unthankful people, cruel, tyrannical, and most ungodly magistrates were permitted to reign, by whom the people were oppressed and spoiled of their liberties, whereby sedition was stirred up; and thereupon followed such cruel tyranny, that under the name of justice no small number of the people were burned alive. After which cruelty followed such murder universally in the city and in the fields, that the fathers feared their sons, and the brethren their brethren. Which unquietness ceased not, until God's severe vengeance was once poured forth upon such as obstinately refused and persecuted Christ Jesus and his doctrine.

But to return to the treatment and preservation of Christ's church at that time. It is evident, that most sharply it was persecuted, and yet daily did it increase and multiply. (Acts xii.) It was compelled to flee from city to city, from realm to realm, and from one nation to another; and yet so wondrously was it preserved, that a great number of those whom the wicked priests, by their bloody tyranny, exiled and banished from Jerusalem, were kept alive till God's vengeance was poured forth upon that most wicked generation. The remembrance of this, beloved in the Lord, is such comfort and consolation unto my heart, that neither my tongue nor my pen can express the same. For this assuredly is my hope and expectation, that like as Christ Jesus appeared to his disciples, when there was nothing in their hearts but anguish and desperation; and like as he preserved and multiplied their number under the most extreme persecution—so shall he do to his afflicted flock within the realm of England this day, in spite of all his enemies. First, I say, this is my hope, that a just vengeance shall overtake those blood-thirsty tyrants, by whom Christ Jesus in his members is now crucified among you. And after that, his verity shall so appear to the comfort of those who now mourn, that they shall hear and know the voice of their own pastor. And this shall our merciful God do unto us, to let us know, and in practice understand

that his promises are infallible, and that he will not treat us according to the wicked weakness of our corrupt nature; which always is ready to fall from God, to distrust his promises, and to forget that ever we have received benefit or comfort from God's hand, when trouble lieth upon us, or when extreme danger doth appear.

And therefore, beloved in the Lord, albeit you find your hearts sometimes assaulted with dolour, with grudging, or with some kind of desperation; yet despair not utterly, neither be ye troubled above measure, as that Christ Jesus should never visit you again. Not so, dear brethren, not so; for such imperfections rested with Christ's own apostles for a long time, and yet they did not hinder his coming again unto them. No more shall our weakness and imperfections hinder the brightness of his countenance, and the comfort of his word, yet once again to shine before us; provided always, that Judas, his obstinacy, his impenitency, and traitorous heart be absent from us, as I doubt not but it is from the members of Christ's body, who are permitted sometimes to fall, so that of the most fervent professors they become fearful deniers of the most known truth. But they are not permitted of any continuance to blaspheme, neither to remain in unbelief and desperation to the end, as in Christ's apostles plainly may be seen. And that more clearly we may understand our times and estate within the realm of England, this day, to agree with the time and estate of Christ's disciples, immediately after his death, let us consider what befell them before and after the same.

Before Christ's passion, as they were instructed by Christ's own mouth of many things appertaining to that kingdom of God, which they neither perfectly understood, neither worthily then regarded; so were they advertised and oftimes admonished, that Christ their Master should suffer a cruel death, that they should be ashamed, slandered, and offended in him, also that they should flee from him. And finally, that persecution and trouble, from time to time, should come upon them. With these most dolorous tidings Christ also promised, that he should arise upon the third day; that he should see them again to their comfort and consolation; and that he should mightily deliver them from all troubles and adversities.

But what availed all these admonitions to Christ's disciples, before his death, or in the extremity of their anguish

shortly after the same? Did they fear, and verily look for trouble before it came? Or did they look for any comfort, when the forespoken trouble was come? It is most evident that no such thing entered into their hearts. For before Christ's death, their greatest mind was upon worldly honour, for which sometimes they debated and contended among themselves; yea, even when Christ was most earnestly preaching his cross. (Luke xxii.) And after his death, they were so oppressed with anguish, with care, with dolour, and desperation, that neither could the witnessing of the women, affirming that they had seen Christ; neither the grave, left empty and void; neither the angels, who appeared to certify his resurrection; neither yet the very voice and presence of Christ Jesus himself, remove all doubts from their afflicted hearts: but from time to time their minds wavered, and could not be fully established, that their Lord and Master was verily risen to their comfort, according to his former promises.

In this case I consider the true professors of Christ's holy gospel to be at this day in the realm of England. For these days of our present dolour and tribulation have been before spoken and blown in our ears long before they came. Our weakness and frail infirmity was also painted forth before our eyes; but who would have believed that the days of our trouble had been so nigh, or that so short a tempest should have overthrown so great a multitude? I think no man within the whole realm. For all men appeared to live in careless security, as though the immutable sentence of God, pronouncing that whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, had nothing that appertained to our age. (2 Tim. iii.) And such a bold confidence, or rather a vain persuasion, had a great number, of their own strength, that if they had continued without any backsliding, they might have been judged rather angels than men.

But, beloved in the Lord, the sword of anguish and of dolour hath now pierced the tender heart of Christ's mother, (that is, of his true Church,) so that the cogitations of many hearts are sufficiently revealed. (Luke ii.) The fire is come, which as it hath burned away with a blast the stubble, hay, and wood; so, in trying the gold, silver, and precious stones, it hath found such dross and dust, that the whole mass may appear to be consumed. (1 Cor. iii.) For who now calls to mind, that the same

voice which forespake our dolours, forespake also our everlasting comfort with Christ Jesus? Who delights now in his loving promises? Who rejoices under the cross? Yea, who rather doth not fear, tremble, grudge, and lament, as though there were no help in God, or as though he regarded not the trouble which we suffer? These are the imperfections that continually remain in this our corrupt nature; the knowledge whereof ought to move us earnestly to cry, O Lord, increase our faith, be merciful unto us, and let us not drown in the deep for ever. If we thus call upon God with unfeigned hearts, then shall Christ Jesus appear to our comfort; his power shall be known to the praise and glory of his own name, in despite of all his combined enemies. And this is the chief and principal cause of my comfort and consolation in these most dolorous days, that neither our infirmities nor daily desperation can hinder Christ Jesus from returning to us again.

The other cause of my comfort is, that I am assured that the judgment of these tyrants that now oppress us shall not slip, but that vengeance shall fall upon them without expectation. For sufficiently they have declared the malice of their minds. They have violated the law and holy ordinances of the Lord our God; they have opened their mouths against his eternal verity; they have exiled his truth, and established their own lies; they daily persecute the innocents, and stoutly maintain open murderers. Their hearts are obdurate, and their faces are become shameless, like harlots: so that no hope of repentance nor amendment is to be had of them; and therefore destruction shall suddenly fall upon them. But with what kind of plagues they shall be stricken in this life; and whom God shall appoint to execute his vengeance upon them, that I remit to his good pleasure and further revelation. But their manifest iniquity is unto me an assured assurance, that they cannot long escape the vengeance most justly deserved by them. But in the mean season, beloved brethren, ye must avoid two things. The former, that ye presume not to be revengers of your own cause, but that ye resign over vengeance unto Him who only is able to requite them according to their malicious minds. Secondly, that ye hate not with any carnal hatred these blind, cruel, and malicious tyrants; but that ye learn of Christ to pray for your persecutors, lamenting and bewailing that the devil should so prevail against them, that

headlong they should run, body and soul, to perpetual perdition. And note well, that I say, we may not hate them with a carnal hatred; that is to say, only because they trouble our bodies: for there is a spiritual hatred, which David calleth a perfect hatred, which the Holy Ghost engenders in the hearts of God's elect, against the rebellious contemners of his holy statutes. And it is, when we more lament that God's glory is suppressed, and that Christ's flock is defrauded of their wholesome food, than that our bodies are persecuted. With this hatred was Jeremiah inflamed, when he prayed, Let me see thy vengeance taken upon thine enemies, O Lord. (Jer. xi.) With this hatred may we hate tyrants, and earnestly may we pray for their destruction, be they kings or queens, princes or prelates. And further ye shall note, that the prayers made in the fervency of this hatred, are before God so acceptable, that oftimes he that prayeth obtaineth the self-same thing that the external words of his prayer do mean, as David, Jeremiah, and other of the prophets, saw with their corporeal eyes the hot vengeance of God poured forth upon the cruel tyrants of their age; and I am assured that some, who this day do sob and groan under your tyrannical bishops, shall see upon the papists within the realm of England.*

This my affirmation proceeds not from any conjecture of man's fantasy, but from the ordinary course of God's judgments against manifest contemners of his precepts, from the beginning. Which is this, First, to rebuke and notify by his messengers such sins as before the world are not known to be sin. Secondly, to provoke to repentance. Thirdly, to suffer the reprobate to declare their own impenitency before the world. And lastly, to pour upon them such manifest vengeance, that his church may be instructed, as well of his power, as of his severe judgments against disobedience. This was the order of his judgment against Pharaoh, against Saul, against Jeroboam, against Herod, against the scribes and pharisees, and against the whole city of Jerusalem.

Our ears have heard, and our eyes have seen the first three parts of the Lord's judgment executed against the papists within the realm of England. For we have heard

* In the latter part of queen Mary's reign, great scarcity and sickness prevailed, many persons of all ranks died, and much distress prevailed. The awful death of Gardiner is well known.

their summoning and citation duly executed by the messengers of God's word. We have heard them accused, and convicted before their own faces of theft and murder, of blasphemy against God, of idolatry, and finally, of all abominations. Which crimes being laid to their charge in their own presence, they were not able to deny; so potent, so plain and evident was God's word, whereby their secret blotches and old festered sores were discovered and revealed.

We know that long process of time hath been granted, by God's lenity, for their conversion and repentance: and how little the same hath availed these present days may testify. For who now doth not espy their malice to increase, and their obstinacy to be such, as none can be greater? Shall we then think, that God will give over his cause, as though he were not able to prevail against tyrants? Not so, dear brethren, not so. But even so assuredly as our God liveth, by whose Spirit some of his elect were stirred up, first to espy the great abominations of those tyrants in this our age; which messengers God preserved, in despite of their tyranny, to proclaim and notify, before their faces, such sins, as the world knew not to be sin—and as assuredly as we have espied them still to continue in malice against God, against his eternal verity, and against the messengers of the same, so assuredly shall we see God's extreme plagues poured forth upon them, even in this corporeal life; that some of us may witness to the generation that shall follow, the wondrous works that the Lord hath wrought, and will work in this our age. Neither shall these plagues, more than the word of God which passed before, work in them any true repentance, but still in a blind rage they shall rebel against the majesty of God; for the deadly venom of that malicious serpent, their father the devil, can never be purged from their cankered hearts. And therefore, after these plagues, some of which we have heard and seen—for what a plague was it to the false bishop of Durham, before his own face to be called murderer and thief, and of the same so to be convicted, that he neither could himself deny it, neither any of his proctors or divine doctors, being present with him, durst enterprise to speak one word in defence of his cause?*—After these plagues, I say, some of which

* Tonstal convicted of murder and theft, to his face, at Berwick. —*Knox.*

we have seen, and the rest we shortly look for, the last remains—the unquenchable fire, which is prepared for their portion.

And therefore, yet again, dearly beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ, hope you against hope, and against all worldly appearance.... And therefore, abide ye patiently the time that is appointed for our correction, and to the full ripeness of their malicious minds. Be not discouraged, although the bishops have gotten the victory. So did the Benjamites, (natural brethren to our bishops,) defenders of whoredom, and of abominable adultery, twice prevail against the Israelites, who fought at God's commandment. Ye shall consider, beloved brethren, that the counsels of God are profound and inscrutable. The most just man is not innocent in his sight.

There may be secret causes why God sometimes will permit the most wicked to prevail and triumph in the most unjust aetion; but yet will he not long delay to execute his wrath and justly deserved vengeance, upon such as are proud murderers, obstinate idolaters, and impenitent malefactors. And therefore they have not great cause to rejoice: for albeit they have once prevailed against flesh, yet shall God shortly bring them to confusion and shame for ever.

Let Winchester, and his cruel council, devise and study till his wits fail, how the kingdom of his father, the anti-christ of Rome, may prosper. And let him and them drink the blood of God's saints, till they be drunken, and they burst, yet shall they never prevail long in their attempts. Their counsels and determinations shall be like the dream of a hungry or thirsty man, who in his sleep dreams that he is eating or drinking; but after he is awaked, his pain continues, and his soul is impatient and nothing eased. Even so shall these tyrants after their profound counsels, long devices, and assured determinations, understand and know, that the hope of hypocrites shall be frustrate; that a kingdom begun with tyranny and blood, can neither be stable nor permanent, but that the glory, the riches, and maintainers of the same shall be as straw in the flame of fire. Altogether with a blast they shall be consumed in such sort, that their palaces shall be a heap of stones; their congregations shall be desolate; and such as depend upon their help shall fall into destruction and ignominy with them.

And therefore, beloved brethren in our Saviour Jesus Christ, seeing that neither our imperfections nor frail weakness can hinder Christ Jesus to return to us by the presence of his word, neither the tyranny of these blood-thirsty wolves may so devour Christ's small flock, but that a great number shall be preserved to the praise of God's glory, neither that these most cruel tyrants can long escape God's vengeance; let us in comfort lift up our heads, and constantly look for the Lord's deliverance; with heart and voice saying to our God, O Lord, albeit other lords than thou have power over our bodies, yet let us only remember thee and thy holy name. To whom be praise before the congregation. Amen. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by his omnipotent Spirit, guide and rule your hearts in his true fear to the end. Amen.

Written at Dieppe, the last of May, An. 1554.

LETTER XII.

To his loving Sister, Mrs. Amy Locke, wife to Mr. Harry Locke, merchant, nigh to Bow-kirk, Cheapside, in London.*

The perpetual increase of the Holy Spirit, for salutations.

As the hasty departing of the messengers made your letters, as you write, brief,—so does it make mine to be imperfect and rude; for at night I received them, and I being to occupy the public place to-morrow, the messenger was to depart without any signification of my remembrance towards you, or else with these, though nothing to the purpose. Touching your troubles (spiritual I mean) fear not to be plain with me; and so faithfully as I would that God should distribute to me in my necessity, so will I endeavour myself to communicate with you what his Spirit teaches me within his most sacred word. In the mean time I am assured that you are not destitute of his Holy Spirit, for it floweth, and giveth witness of itself in your grievous complaint and earnest prayer. Easy it is to think well of God, to pray and to promise to ourselves all good things of his, when his strength upholds us; but when he appears to leave us a little in our own weak

* Bow Church.

corruption, and to show his face angry against sin, then to seek unto his promises, then to call upon his help, and to appeal to him, as it were, that he declare himself a true, merciful, and benign Father towards us, is the greatest glory that we can give unto him. Yea it is to overcome him, and to be victor over him by his own strength, which albeit we feel not in the present combat, no more than Jacob did in wrestling with the angel, yet shall we find the comfort of it when the storm is a little assuaged. For how is it possible that we should call upon Him for help, whom we think armed to our destruction, except the secret power of his Holy Spirit moved us thereto? In such cases hypocrisy hath no place, but the sorely bruised heart pours forth anguish into the bosom of Him, whom we confess only able to remedy us. But of this matter, alas! I may not now write.

You write that your desire is earnest to see me. Dear sister, if I should express the thirst and languor which I have had for your presence, I should appear to pass measure. To have seen you in prosperity was to me no doubt comfortable, but now, if it shall please God that I should see you in these most dolorous days, my comfort should be doubled; for in prosperity, in the midst of mirth, my heart quaked for the sorrows to come, and sometimes I sobbed, fearing what should become of you. But now to see you tried a little under the cross, would cause my heart greatly to rejoice—yea I weep and rejoice in remembrance of you, but that would vanish by the comfort of your presence, which I assure you is so dear to me, that, if the charge of this little flock here did not impede me, my presence should prevent my letter.

I have not made your commendations to the persons specified in the letter, except to my mother and wife, who heartily re-salute you, by reason of the sudden departure of the bearer. As touching James Young, he left your bible in Scotland amongst other things whereof he made money; but that is no matter; with the same heart that I sent it unto you, I will that you take it, using the same to the glory of God. If you have occasion to write to Mr. Hickman, and his wife, your sister and mine unfeignedly beloved, salute them heartily in my name, and show that I will write, as God shall give opportunity. Against the market in Frankford* you shall look for letters, if God

* Frankfort fair.

pleases, more largely. Remember me, now burdened with double cares, in your daily prayers unto our God. The grace of the Lord Jesus rest with you for ever.

At Geneva, the 19th November, 1556.

Your brother,
JOHN KNOX.

LETTER XIII.

To Mr. Locke.

The perpetual increase of the Holy Spirit, for salutations.

DEARLY beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ. If power and possibility were correspondent to good will, my lines should not be so bare and brief unto you; but daily troubles occurring as well in my domestic charge, wherewith before I have not been accustomed, and therefore are they the more fearful, as also in the administration of public things appertaining to the poor flock here assembled in Christ's name—do compel me oftentimes to forget not only my most especial friends, but also myself, in some things necessary to the body and corporeal health; and therefore I doubt not but that you will accept my rude letters in good part; till such time as God shall grant me better opportunity. And in this mean season you shall receive my judgment upon the first temptation of Christ, which I wrote when in Scotland at the request of some, who before, being in great anguish, confessed themselves somewhat reclaimed, yea, as they said, brought from the bottom of hell, by the doctrine of the same. For first I taught it before I did write it. As I can find opportunity, and some quietness, you may perchance receive the rest of the same matter, which is not all complete; for satan did so trouble me on the one part, and so did my brethren crave the duty to be paid to them on the other part, that small space was then granted for writing.*

My other letters I trust you have received ere this, in the which you may perceive my estate; also you may learn of this our brother, dearly beloved in the Lord, who

* This treatise is printed in the present volume, but does not appear to have been fully completed.

more conveniently can explain all things that are here, than I can write. Were it not that you were partly impeded by the command of your head, and partly by such good occasion as God hath now offered you to remain where you are, in my heart I would have wished, yea and cannot cease to wish, that it would please God to guide and conduct you to this place; where I neither fear, nor am ashamed to say, is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the apostles. In other places I confess Christ to be truly preached, but manners and religion so sincerely reformed I have not yet seen in any other place besides. Satan, I confess, rages against the one and the other, but potent is He that hath promised to be with us in all such enterprises as we take in hand at his commandment, for the glory of his name, and for maintenance of his true religion; and therefore we fear the less any contrary power. Yea in the boldness of our God we altogether contemn them, be they kings, emperors, men, angels, or devils, for they shall never be able to prevail against the simple truth of God which we openly profess. By the permission of God they may appear to prevail against our bodies, but our cause shall triumph in spite of satan. Other causes moving me to desire your presence, yea, and the presence of all such as unfeignedly fear God, if possible, I will remit to some better opportunity. This other letter it will please you to send to Mr. Hickman, with my hearty commendations to your sister and mine. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ rest with you.

At Geneva, the 9th December, 1556.

Your brother,

JOHN KNOX.

LETTER XIV.

To his loving sisters in Edinburgh, Janet Adamson and Janet Anderson.

Grace and peace from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for salutations.

BELOVED sister. With most hearty commendations I have scribbled these few lines unto you, to let you understand that I have received the contents of your letter. God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ make me mindful of his ample benefits, which he most plentifully poureth upon

me. And send you, and all that call upon his godly name, such comfort and mercy both in spiritual and temporal things, as he hath moved your hearts to show towards me and other afflicted brethren. In all matters concerning your conscience, I must at this time remit you to my former letters, which I trust are common betwixt you and the rest of our sisters, for to me you are all equal in Christ; and therefore I wish that both counsel, exhortation, and admonition written to any one of you do serve to you all. In my last letters to our sister Janet, I touched upon what duty the wife owed to the husband, and therefore I provided that this our brother should reason the same matter with Mr. Calvin. Let my letter be considered, and let him faithfully repent, as I doubt not but he will, his answer in that and other particular articles. And so I trust ye will fully understand what God requires of you. God grant me his Spirit to obey your most just petition. For prayer is not always in the power of man. Your husband is dear to me, because he is a man endowed with some good gifts, but most dear, for that he is your husband. Charity moveth me to thirst for his illumination, both for his comfort, and for the trouble which you sustain by his coldness, which justly may be called infidelity. But, dear sister, the prophets of God are oft impeded to pray for such as they love unfeignedly in the flesh. This, I say, not that I find as yet any such thing within myself, but I would advertise you that I dare promise nothing whereof the performance is not within my own powers.

If God will have you exercised under that kind of cross, which is most bitter, namely, to have your head appointed to you by God for your comfort, to be your enemy, with patience you must abide his merciful deliverance, determining with yourself never to obey manifest iniquity for the pleasure of any mortal man—which if you do, your tears shall be turned into joy, and the bitterness of your dolour into the sweet comfort which now cannot be felt. The God of comfort and consolation assist you with his almighty Spirit, valiantly to fight your battle to the end.

Salute all faithful acquaintance in my name. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ rest with you.

From Lyons, 1557.

Your loving brother,
JOHN KNOX.

LETTER XV.

*Letter to John Fox the Martyrologist.**

To his loving brother, master Fox, be these delivered at Basil.

The mighty comfort of the Holy Ghost for salutation.

Dearly beloved brother, albeit at the departure of this our brother, from whom I received your loving and friendly letter, I could write nothing by reason of the evil disposition of my body, yet because I could not suffer him to depart without some remembrance of my duty to you, I use the help of my left hand, that is of my wife, in scribbling these few lines unto you, concerning my purpose and mind in publishing the first blast of the trumpet.

When the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that shall be known which now many cannot be persuaded, namely, that therein I neither have sought myself, nor yet the vain praise of men. My rude vehemence and inconsidered affirmations, which may appear rather to proceed from choler than of zeal and reason, I do not excuse; but to have used any other title more plausible, thereby to have allured the world by any art, as I never purposed it, so do I not now purpose it. To me it is enough to say that black is not white, and man's tyranny and foolishness is not God's perfect ordinance, which I do, not so much to correct commonwealths as to deliver my own conscience, and to instruct the conscience of some simple persons who I fear are yet ignorant in that matter, but further of this I delay till better opportunity.

Salute your wife and daughters heartily in my name. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ rest with you now and for ever.

From Geneva, the 18th of May, 1558.

Your brother to prove,

John Knox.

I, your sister, the writer hereof, salute you and your wife most heartily, thanking her for her loving tokens which my mother and I received from mistress Kent.

* From the original, among the Harleian MSS. British Museum

London: Printed by W. Clowes, Stamford-street.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01148 7057

DATE DUE

NOV 2 1 2001		
JAN 0 8 2002		
[illegible]		
FEB 0 4 2002		

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A